



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**LONE-WOLF TERRORIST RADICALIZATION AND  
THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA: ENSURING MUTUAL  
COOPERATION BETWEEN AT-RISK MUSLIM  
AMERICANS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

by

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September 2015

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AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

While scholars study the radicalization process that produces lone-wolf terrorists in America, news stories regularly report on Muslim Americans leaving their local communities to join terrorist organizations. Currently, radicalizing individuals to act as lone wolves is the most successful method of Islamist attack on the American homeland. A novel approach to analyzing radicalization is employment of the prisoner's dilemma, which examines the motivations behind individual decision-making.

The prisoner's dilemma is used by game theorists and international-relations scholars to demonstrate how persons who might ordinarily be expected to cooperate may actually work against each other and defect from previous agreements or understandings. Because lone-wolf attacks will likely continue to pose the most frequent threat to the U.S. homeland, it is imperative to learn how potential homegrown terrorists can be encouraged to identify with their local communities rather than defect from the social bonds of church, school, neighborhood, and workplace. This thesis explores how the prisoner's dilemma may reveal ways to discourage radicalism in at-risk Muslim Americans.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AI	Amnesty International
CO	Commanding Officer
EO	Equal Opportunity
IG	Inspector General
HT	Hizb al-Tahrir
IR	International Relations
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
USUHS	Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

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During the first half of 2015—the last months of my time at the Naval Postgraduate School—I suffered the passing of my father, Theodor Arthur Cedros, and my mother, Marilyn Ruth Bolton. I will carry their memory with me the rest of my life. Death is always hard, and the death of the two who reared and loved me from childhood is, for me, especially hard. Their lives have taught me the importance of life and the need to leave a lasting contribution in the world. During my periods of study and self-reflection, I came across an arresting quote from philosopher Bertrand Russell: “The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.” This thesis, along with so much of what I do, is dedicated to my amazing parents, in the hope that the reader will understand how grateful I am that they raised me to be the man I am today.

I learned another important lesson while at NPS, and that is that an individual is the average of the five people he spends most of his time with. Thankfully, I have spent the majority of my time at NPS with two inspiring thinkers, scholars, and advisors, professors Erik Dahl and Carolyn Halladay. Success is rarely achieved without the help of a strong support system. Athletes cannot achieve victory without a coach to drive their daily practice, and the same can be said for the art of writing a thesis over the span of eighteen months. These professors’ relentless pursuit to draw out the best in my ideas led to this thesis, and I am thankful for everything they have done for me.

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## I. AVERTING LONE-WOLF TERRORIST RADICALIZATION

The biggest concern we have right now is not the launching of a major terrorist operation, although that risk is always there; the risk that we're especially concerned over right now is the lone-wolf terrorist.

—Barack Obama<sup>1</sup>

### A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

While scholars study the process by which individuals are radicalized and become lone-wolf terrorists in America, news stories regularly report on Muslim Americans leaving their communities to join terrorist organizations. Currently, lone-wolf terrorism is the most successful method of attack on American soil.<sup>2</sup> In investigating the radicalization process, one approach that has not been applied is the “prisoner’s dilemma,” which analyzes the motivations that underlie decision making. This thesis explores if concepts used in the prisoner’s dilemma may suggest ways to discourage at-risk Muslim Americans from becoming radicalized.

The prisoner’s dilemma is cited by game theorists and international-relations scholars to demonstrate how individuals who might ordinarily be expected to cooperate may actually work against each other and defect from any previous agreement or understanding that brought them together. Robert Axelrod’s *The Evolution of Cooperation* enlarges on the prisoner’s dilemma to explain how states and other actors can be encouraged to collaborate in the absence of a central authority that enforces cooperation.<sup>3</sup> Because lone-wolf terrorist attacks will, in the words of the director of national intelligence, “likely continue to pose the most frequent threat to the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup>Wolf Blitzer, “Obama: Biggest terror fear is the lone wolf,” CNN News, August 16, 2011, <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/16/obama-biggest-terror-fear-is-the-lone-wolf/>.

<sup>2</sup>Jerome P. Bjelopera and Mark A. Randol, “American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat,” (CRS Report No. R41416) (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), 2, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=743261>.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 1.

Homeland,”<sup>4</sup> it is imperative to learn how potential homegrown terrorists can be encouraged to identify with their own local communities rather than defect from the social bonds of their churches, schools, and workplaces.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001 (“9/11”) and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the global jihadist movement has become extremely decentralized.<sup>5</sup> A lack of central command has led terrorist groups and members to exploit social media to spread jihadist ideology and recruit supporters from around the world. The geographical limitations encountered by terrorist organizations in the past are effectively removed, yielding a virtually leaderless social movement.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, with advances in technology, individuals and small groups can more easily wreak massive destruction within a locality—an ability once reserved to larger entities.<sup>7</sup> The use of communications technologies to reach potential recruits is of utmost importance to jihadists. As Bruce Hoffman points out, “al-Qaida’s resiliency (and longevity) is predicated on its continued ability to recruit and mobilize would-be fighters, supporters, sympathizers.”<sup>8</sup>

One result of technological changes in the global jihadist movement has been an increasing threat of lone-wolf terrorist attacks within the United States. This thesis analyzes two case studies in radicalization, investigating what drove the Muslim-American subjects from their local communities. It also examines a case in which an individual turned away from jihad and discusses the factors that led to his renewed commitment to the community. The prisoner’s dilemma is applied to factors that either encouraged defection (to terrorism) or mutual cooperation (with local communities). This

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<sup>4</sup>*Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, Senate Armed Services Committee, (2014) (Statement of James Clapper, Director of National Intelligence, for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence), 4.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>6</sup>Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2008), 143–46.

<sup>7</sup>Bruce Hoffman, “Terrorist Dot Com: Using the Internet for Terrorist Recruitment and Mobilization,” in Gabriel Weinmann *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment*, ed. James J.F. Forest (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), 54.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 54.

study has implications for future policy, specifically in how the concepts and logic of the prisoner's dilemma may help deter lone-wolf radicalization and attacks.

### **C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES**

This thesis analyzes two hypotheses. First, it is posited that the findings of this research will not depart significantly from what many scholars of terrorist radicalization have concluded, but rather, will add support from the perspective of the prisoner's dilemma. This primary hypothesis proposes that effective community engagement is needed to promote passive and active aversion towards radicalism, within a community and its members. Two variables—the community and the potential lone-wolf—are employed.

The second hypothesis is that analysis from the prisoner's-dilemma perspective will confirm the mutual cooperation postulated by Robert Axelrod in *The Evolution of Cooperation*. Axelrod suggests that in state-to-state interaction, taking a long-term approach to problems, being ready to forgive small provocations, and clarity concerning community rules and expectations of behavior are the keys to cooperation over defection.<sup>9</sup> This thesis proposes that these principles may be adopted for de-radicalization and counter-radicalization efforts.

### **D. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature on local, lone-wolf terrorism is limited when compared to the body of work on international, group-based terrorism.<sup>10</sup> Considering the ramifications of 9/11, the amount of study poured into international terrorism is understandable. Mark Hamm writes, "The Congressional Research Service lists a total of 1,649 reports on the general topic of terrorism. Only ten of them address the problem of lone-wolf terrorism."<sup>11</sup>

Policymakers are now realizing the potential threat of lone-wolf terrorist attacks. The startling and unfortunate statistic is that lone wolves are quite successful: as one

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<sup>9</sup>Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 5–7.

<sup>10</sup>Mark Hamm, "Lone-Wolf Terrorism in America: Forging a New Way of Looking at an Old Problem," Indiana State University, May 2013, 3, <http://informationcollective.org/lone-wolf/>.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

study of terrorism in America noted, “Lone wolves conducted all four successful homegrown attacks since 9/11.”<sup>12</sup> After the lone-wolf attacks in 2011 by Anders Behring Breivik in Norway, the U.S. government recognized the frightening reality of this threat. President Barack Obama stated, after the attacks in Oslo, “The risk that we’re especially concerned over right now is the lone-wolf terrorist, somebody with a single weapon able to carry out wide-scale massacres of the sort we saw in Norway.”<sup>13</sup>

This literature review discusses various definitions of lone-wolf terrorism and establishes a working definition. It then examines the diverse theories of how individuals are radicalized and the variables that contribute to this process. Next, this review delves into the scarce material regarding de-radicalization, and finally discusses the prisoner’s dilemma—where and how it has been applied and the potential importance it has in gaining Muslim-American cooperation against lone-wolf radicalization.

## **1. Defining Lone-Wolf Terrorism**

As with the study of international terrorism, there is no professional consensus on the definition of lone-wolf terrorism. Robert Mueller, former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), suggests that lone-wolf terrorists be defined as, “terrorists who carry out attacks individually and independently from established terrorist organizations, are particularly hard to identify before they strike, and therefore pose a major security threat.”<sup>14</sup> Mueller’s usage defines a lone wolf in broad terms, but does not accurately define the method by which they conduct terrorist attacks, or define the intent of the violence. Scholar Jeffrey Simon tackles methods of attack in *Lone-Wolf Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat*, by defining lone-wolf terrorism as:

The use or threat of violence or nonviolent sabotage, including cyber-attacks, against government, society, business, the military, or any other target by an individual acting alone or with minimal support from one or two other people, to further a political, social, religious, financial or other

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<sup>12</sup>Bjelopera and Randol, “American Jihadist Terrorism,” 2.

<sup>13</sup>Blitzer, “Biggest terror fear,” CNN News.

<sup>14</sup>*War on Terrorism*, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate, (2003) (Statement of Robert S. Mueller III, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation).

related goal, or, when not having such an objective, nevertheless has the same effect, or potential effect, upon government, society, business, or the military in terms of creating fear and/or disrupting daily life and/or causing government, society, business, or the military to react with heightened security and/ or other response.<sup>15</sup>

While Simon clarifies ways in which lone wolves attack, he argues that they are not connected with a terrorist organization.<sup>16</sup>

Ramon Spaaij, on the other hand, argues that lone wolves may be affiliated with terrorist organizations before their radicalization:

Although lone-wolf terrorists are by definition not tied to any established terrorist group, this is not to say that at one time they may not have been a member or affiliate of some type of extremist group; they may even have obtained some institutional training or support in the past.<sup>17</sup>

This contrast between Simon and Spaaij's definitions highlights a difficulty when determining who is a lone-wolf and who is not. The radicalization cases in this thesis focus on individuals who did not have prior affiliation with extremist groups to the extent that Spaaij suggests. The de-radicalization case study, however, does fit within Spaaij's definition. Accordingly, this thesis adopts a combination of Simon's definition—a lone-wolf terrorist who may act with minimal outside support—and Spaaij's definition—a lone-wolf in affiliation with terrorist organizations.

It is important to note the intentions behind acts of violence. Violence directed for financial gain or personal vengeance is not classified as lone-wolf terrorism. The purpose must be "generally directed in pursuit of larger political, ideological, or religious aims."<sup>18</sup> This research examines individuals who were motivated apart from criminal or personal incentives.

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<sup>15</sup>Jeffrey D. Simon, *Lone-wolf Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat*, (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2013), 266.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>17</sup>Ramon Spaaij, "The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment," School of Social Sciences and La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, July 24, 2014, 856.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 857.

## 2. Theories of Radicalization

Pinpointing the transition toward radicalization is a complex endeavor for scholars in all fields of inquiry. Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt of the New York police department attempt to distill the radicalization process in an article entitled, “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat.” They theorize four stages in becoming a radicalized, lone-wolf terrorist:

Pre-Radicalization: The point of origin for individuals before they begin the radicalization process. It is their life situation before they were exposed to and adopted jihadi-Salafi [ideology] ... as their own ideology.

Self-Identification: The phase where individuals, influenced by both internal and external factors, begin to explore Salafi Islam, gradually gravitate away from their old identity, and begin to associate themselves with like-minded individuals and adopt this ideology as their own.

Indoctrination: The phase in which an individual progressively intensifies his beliefs, wholly adopts jihadi-Salafi ideology and concludes, without question, that the conditions and circumstances exist where action is required to support and further the cause ... While the initial self-identification process may be an individual act, ... association with like-minded people is an important factor as the process deepens.

Jihadization: The phase in which members of the cluster accept their individual duty to participate in [terrorist activities] and self-designate themselves as holy warriors or mujahedeen. Ultimately, the group will begin operational planning for the ... terrorist attack. These “acts in furtherance” will include planning, preparation and execution.<sup>19</sup>

The process may end in jihad, but it is not sequential and not everyone passes through all stages.<sup>20</sup> The U.S. Congress recognized and supported Silber and Bhatt’s theory in a staff report: “After more than two years of research into homegrown terrorism cases in the United States ... the [NYPD] developed a model to explain how this core enlistment

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<sup>19</sup>Joseph Lieberman and Susan Collins, *Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet, and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat*, United States Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, May 8, 2008, 4; Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat,” New York City Police Department, 2007, 24–45, [http://prtl-prd-web.nyc.gov/html/nypd/downloads/pdf/public\\_information/NYPD\\_Report-Radicalization\\_in\\_the\\_West.pdf](http://prtl-prd-web.nyc.gov/html/nypd/downloads/pdf/public_information/NYPD_Report-Radicalization_in_the_West.pdf).

<sup>20</sup>Silber and Bhatt, “Radicalization,” 21.

message ... transforms ‘unremarkable people’ into terrorists.”<sup>21</sup> Ramon Spaaij, in his book *Understanding Lone-wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations, and Prevention*, concurs with Silber and Bhatt’s theory on the radicalization process.<sup>22</sup>

Other scholars do not find the process so simple.<sup>23</sup> Rex Hudson and Bruce Hoffman argue that there is no way to create a terrorist profile. Hudson concludes, “The personalities of terrorists may be as diverse as the personalities of people in any lawful profession. There do not appear to be any visibly detectable personality traits that would allow authorities to identify a terrorist.”<sup>24</sup> Along the same line, Hoffman argues that because terrorists are more intelligent than the general population might suppose, it is impossible to ascertain intellectual biases that may lead to lone-wolf terrorism.<sup>25</sup> Because it is agreed that there is no single path by which an individual may go rogue,<sup>26</sup> this thesis analyzes the radicalization factors that Silber and Bhatt postulate, as well as the recruitment mechanisms that assist the process.

In the recruitment of lone-wolf terrorists, a key variable is the ever-increasing role of the Internet. Radical online media may attract at-risk individuals; yet at the same time, the diversity of information on the Web can be a powerful passive tool for counterterrorism.<sup>27</sup> The general consensus among scholars, including Marc Sageman, Joseph Nye, George Michael, and Ramon Spaaij, is that social media, “has become a crucial tool that allows [terrorists] to operate as networks of decentralized franchises,

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<sup>21</sup>Lieberman and Collins, *Violent Islamist Extremism*, 4.

<sup>22</sup>Ramon Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations, and Prevention*, SpringerBriefs in Criminology, 47–61, DOI: 10.1007/978-94-007-2981-0\_1, 2012.

<sup>23</sup>Mohammed M. Hafez and Creighton Mullins, “The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (Forthcoming, November 2015), 5-6; Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, revised and expanded edition (New York: Colombia University Press, 2006), 38; Rex Hudson, *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?*, The Library of Congress, September 1999, 60.

<sup>24</sup>Hudson, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 60.

<sup>25</sup>Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 38.

<sup>26</sup>Bjelopera and Randol, “American Jihadist Terrorism,” ix; Hafez and Mullins, “Radicalization Puzzle,” 2-3.

<sup>27</sup>Jennifer Mock, “Winning Hearts and Minds: The Role of the Internet in Shaping Attitudes Towards Terrorism” (master’s thesis, The Fletcher School Tufts University, April 28, 2014), 7; R. Kim Cragin, “Resisting Violent Extremism: A Conceptual Model for Non-Radicalization,” RAND Corporation, December 07, 2013, 350.

creates brand image, recruit adherents, raise funds, provide training manuals and manage operations.”<sup>28</sup> Because the Internet eliminates the geographical barriers to recruiting around the world,<sup>29</sup> it is discussed in this research as an enlistment tool for luring Muslim Americans away from local communities and toward radical Islam.

Scholars also attempt to explain the precursors that motivate radicalization. Silber and Bhatt find that a number of factors, whether demographic, social, and/or psychological, may drive an individual to become a jihadist or violent jihadist. Studies show that the candidate at risk is typically the age of 35, comfortable economically, well educated, not a criminal, and “unremarkable”—living an ordinary life.<sup>30</sup>

An issue of contention between scholars is the mental state of individuals before radicalization. Spaaij’s research concludes that, among over 198 case studies in the West, three out of five perpetrators had some sort of mental ailment.<sup>31</sup> Scholars Rex Hudson and Bruce Hoffman, on the other hand, identify no general mental deficiencies, “contrary to the stereotype that the terrorist is a psychopath or otherwise mentally disturbed, the terrorist is actually quite sane.”<sup>32</sup> In view of the polarizing perspectives on the mental state of individuals as they radicalize, this thesis takes the middle ground of scholars Silber and Bhatt, who assume that psychological deficiencies can be one of many potential motivating factors in the radicalization of individuals and their defection from local communities to terrorist organizations.

### **3. Theories of De-radicalization**

If information involving lone-wolf terrorism is hard to find, theories on de-radicalization are even scarcer. To examine the subject, this research branches beyond material that centers on the United States. Like radicalization, de-radicalization is fraught

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<sup>28</sup>Joseph S. Nye, “Cyber Power,” Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, May 2010,” 12.

<sup>29</sup>Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 109–123.

<sup>30</sup>Silber and Bhatt, “Radicalization,” 24.

<sup>31</sup>Spaaij, *Understanding Lone-wolf Terrorism*, 49–53.

<sup>32</sup>Hudson, *Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism*, 68.



with variables: “For the individual, terrorism can have as many different potential endings as it can have potential beginnings.”<sup>33</sup>

Omar Ashour defines de-radicalization and determines contributing factors in his book, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*. He defines de-radicalization on two levels, ideological and behavioral, as:

One in which a group reverses its ideology and de-legitimizes the use of violence to achieve political goals, while also moving towards an acceptance of gradual social, political and economic changes within a pluralist context.<sup>34</sup>

While important, Ashour’s definition and discussion are confined to the group-based organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Armee Islamique du Salut in Algeria.<sup>35</sup> More broadly, John Horgan defines de-radicalization as:

The social and psychological process whereby and individual’s commitment to, and involvement in, violent radicalization is reduced to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement and engagement in violent activity. De-radicalization may also refer to any initiative that tries to achieve a reduction of risk of re-offending through addressing the specific and relevant disengagement issues.<sup>36</sup>

While Horgan’s definition focuses specifically on the disengagement of violence for de-radicalization, Donatella Della Porta and Gary LaFree argue that individual de-radicalization should not be defined by whether a person remains violent. To become de-radicalized, an individual must also change attitudes and belief structures and re-integrate into social groups outside the terrorist organization.<sup>37</sup> In this thesis, a combination of Horgan’s and Della Porta and LaFree’s definitions is applied in the de-radicalization case study.

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<sup>33</sup>John Horgan, *Walking Away From Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements*, (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 139.

<sup>34</sup>Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*, (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 5–6.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 5–6.

<sup>36</sup>Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 153.

<sup>37</sup>Donatella Della Porta and Gary LaFree, “Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization,” *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 6, no. 1 (2012), 4.

Ashour's case studies and analysis of group-based de-radicalization are examined for insights into individually based de-radicalizing. In multiple case studies, Ashour discusses external social interactions,<sup>38</sup> concluding that external interactions between terrorist organizations and the community play a factor in de-radicalizing individuals. "Saudi Arabia and Yemen also offer cases where external interaction have led to the de-radicalization of individuals and small factions loosely linked to organizations like al-Qaida."<sup>39</sup> These findings on behavioral and ideological de-radicalization may apply to individual de-radicalization as well.

While Ashour uses the term "social interaction" broadly, other scholars are more specific as to the nature of this socializing. For example, Sagit Yehoshua focuses on the role of good family background and its advantages in influencing de-radicalization. She concludes that family status is just one potential factor of many in the phenomenon of radicalization and its reversal.<sup>40</sup>

Other theorists suggest more extreme examples of de-radicalization. Mohamed Bin Ali suggests that rehabilitation programs are the necessary ingredient to counteract radicalization and allow individuals to become valuable members of their community. Ali argues that radicalized individuals must understand that society views their extreme acts as wrong: "to re-integrate into society, they must see the errors in both their actions and thinking."<sup>41</sup> Horgan supports this assertion in a chapter entitled "Prison was a Good Thing." Though not necessarily a rehabilitation program (per Ali), Horgan's study indicates that imprisonment played a role in fostering reflection, which facilitated disengagement from terrorist movements.<sup>42</sup> The concept of imprisonment and self-reflection are discussed in Chapter IV.

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<sup>38</sup>Ashour, *De-Radicalization of Jihadists*, 118–126, 127–131.

<sup>39</sup>Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 139.

<sup>40</sup>Sagit Yehoshua, "The Social-Psychology of Non-Radicalization: How Not to Become a Terrorist and Why," *The Atkin Paper Series*, January 2010, 14.

<sup>41</sup>Mohamed Bin Ali, "De-Radicalisation Programmes: Changing Minds?," *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies*, September 23, 2008, 3.

<sup>42</sup>Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 49.

Horgan reviews various examples of de-radicalization in his book, *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements*. Examining case studies to determine what worked in de-radicalizing individuals, he finds that contributing factors range from imprisonment to racism against other recruits, growing distance from radical belief structures, and lack of a conscious decision when initially joining.<sup>43</sup>

## **E. UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA**

At first glance, the use of the prisoner's dilemma to analyze radicalization may appear curious, perhaps because this game-theory tool has not previously been applied to the problem at hand. But the prisoner's dilemma is useful in simplifying the question of why a person chooses to radicalize, by focusing on two variables: the youth himself and the community with which he interacts. The term "community" may include a military unit, a church or mosque congregation, a school, a tight-knit family, etc. By identifying community dynamics in each case, this research helps explain who cooperates, who defects, and why.

The prisoner's dilemma was developed in a 1950 RAND study by Merrill Flood and Melvin Dresher, and the term itself was coined by mathematician Albert Tucker.<sup>44</sup> The theory suggests that individuals will act rationally, according to their own best interests; yet in doing so, they may make themselves worse off. The theory is framed as a narrative: two men have been arrested and are immediately separated and interrogated without communicating with each other. The police are looking for a confession and offer a deal to both if one confesses and implicates the other. If neither confesses, the police will charge both with a lesser sentence. If both confess, each will receive twenty years in prison. But if only one man confesses, the snitch will receive a very light sentence and the accomplice will get the maximum: life in prison. Each must choose without knowing what the other will do. From the police point of view, the prisoner's dilemma is useful

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 40–138.

<sup>44</sup>William Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, (Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, 1992), 8.

because it encourages criminals to confess—and to do it quickly, before the other confesses.

It pays to defect if you know your comrade will defect. It also pays to defect if you know your comrade will cooperate. Both parties are best off if neither confesses and both keep their mouths shut, i.e., they cooperate with each other. This mutual cooperation is indicated in the upper-left block of Table 1 and represented by both individuals receiving a value “3.” However, either prisoner may come to the conclusion that if his partner keeps faith with him, he can defect and get the lightest sentence possible. This is represented in the upper-right and lower-left blocks in Table 1 and is known as the “sucker’s pay-off,” so called because one prisoner may get a great deal out of this action—represented by the value “5”—while the other prisoner gets nothing (represented by a zero). Both individuals may reach the same conclusion and, acting in their perceived best interests, may rat out their partner; as a result, they both get sentences. This “mutual defection” results in neither individual gaining anything—represented by zeros in the bottom-right quadrant.

Table 1. Classical Application of Prisoner's Dilemma

		Prisoner A's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Prisoner B's Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0 ✓, ✓

Collectively, the prisoners would have been better off by cooperating with each other and, thereby, serving lesser sentences.<sup>45</sup>

In the tables presented in this thesis, the options are color coordinated to clarify who is cooperating and who is defecting, between the community and the potential radicalized terrorist and the value expressions (0, 1, 3, or 5) remain standard. “Sucker’s pay-off” is used to indicate when one variable defects while the other cooperates, “mutual cooperation” means both variables cooperate with each other, and “mutual defection” means both variables defect.

One difference between the classical prisoner’s dilemma and the version here is the complexity of the local community as a variable, as compared to a prison; that is, while a prison has no dilemma, a community does, just as a potential radical does.

A young Muslim man, when confronted with extremist ideas, may believe that his best option is the upper-right block of Table 1, in which he defects from the local community by becoming a terrorist, while at the same time, his community is trying to cooperate and work with him. The potential terrorist will get a great deal out of this scenario (represented by a 5), while the community receives no value from his defection (represented by 0).

<sup>45</sup>Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, 12.

What may also occur, as explained in Chapter III, is that, unbeknownst to the nascent terrorist, the community has detected his radicalization and invoked law enforcement. These results appear in the bottom-right quadrant of Table 1, where both sides have defected from cooperation and neither gains anything.

The best option for both is the upper-left quadrant of the prisoner's dilemma. This is where the at-risk Muslim continues to be a constructive part of the community and the community cooperates to help avoid his radicalization. Ideas of how a community may do this are discussed in Chapter IV and analyzed in Chapter V.

### **1. Prisoner's Dilemma Application**

The prisoner's dilemma offers startling insights in the realms of economics, science, and social science, in which the pursuit of self-interest leads to poor outcomes. For example, Charles Wheelan applies the prisoner's dilemma to the depletion of natural resources—in particular, fisheries—in his book *Naked Economics*. In this analysis, the variables are Atlantic swordfish and fishermen. Since there is no limit to the number of swordfish an individual can catch, fishermen are given the choice of cooperating in the name of conservation or defecting by taking as many fish as possible. Because the fishermen do not trust each other, they act in their perceived best interests and catch all they can: “right now, my only incentive is to go out and kill as many fish as I can. I have no incentive to conserve the fishery, because any fish I leave is just going to be picked up by the next guy.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, the competing fishermen deplete the swordfish population and all are eventually worse off, as shown in Table 2.

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<sup>46</sup>Charles Wheelan, *Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science*, (New York: Norton, Copyright 2010), 45.

Table 2. Wheelan's Example of Atlantic Swordfish Fishery

		Fisheries' Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Atlantic Swordfish Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0 ✓, ✓
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

The Atlantic swordfish has no part, of course, in deciding whether there is a limit on the catch or how the fishermen act; thus third-party competition is slowly depleting the population, until all fisheries in the area finally put themselves out of business by killing off the available fish, if not the species. Wheelan recommends that the fisheries follow the model of Port Lincoln on Australia's coast, which limits the number of licensed lobster traps to allow the collective fishing community to thrive. Unlike fishers in the United States, fishermen in the Australian community lament, "Why hurt the fishery? It's my retirement fund ... If I rape and pillage the fishery now, in ten years my license won't be worth anything."<sup>47</sup> As a result of this policy, the lobster population is self-sustaining and the industry enjoys mutual cooperation, as indicated in Table 3.

<sup>47</sup>Wheelan, *Naked Economics*, 46.

Table 3. Wheelan's Example of the Australian Lobster Fishery

		Fisheries' Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Australian Lobster Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3 ✓, ✓	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

The prisoner's dilemma has also been applied to the field of biology. Paul Turner and Lin Chao's study, "Prisoner's Dilemma in an RNA Virus," studies RNA at high and low rates of infection within host cells. Defining cooperation and defection as a virus's ability to manufacture and sequester diffusible intracellular products,<sup>48</sup> Turner and Chao conclude that a virus defects because of a lack of clonal structure and mixing of unrelated genotypes at high multiplicity.<sup>49</sup> In layman's terms, though it has evolved to gain an intracellular advantage and act cooperatively, it chooses to be selfish and defect by synthesizing less intercellular product while confiscating large shares for itself.

In the realm of counterterrorism, Todd Sandler and Daniel Arce argue in "Terrorism and Game Theory" that the application of the prisoner's dilemma can enlighten policymakers on the effectiveness of antiterrorist policies. They argue that governments do not cooperate well, compared to the weaker terrorist cells, "who must pool resources and knowledge if they are to threaten much stronger governments."<sup>50</sup> The research in this study is much more mathematical than that presented here, but

<sup>48</sup>Paul E. Turner and Lin Chao, "Prisoner's Dilemma in an RNA Virus," *Department of Biology, University of Maryland*, April 1, 1999, 439.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 441.

<sup>50</sup>Todd Sandler and Daniel G. Arce M., "Terrorism and Game Theory," *Simulation & Gaming* 34 no. 3 (September 2003), 21.



nevertheless offers great insight into the proposition that the actions of one variable (the terrorists) are based on the perceived actions of the other variable (a government).

Table 4. Arce and Sandler's Mathematic Use of Game Theory in Counterterrorism<sup>51</sup>

		Preempt	EU Status quo	Deter
US	Preempt	$2B-c, 2B-c$	$B-c, B$	$B-c-C, B+b-C$
	Status quo	$B, B-c$	0,0	$-C, b-C$
	Deter	$B+b-C, B-c-C$	$b-C, -C$	Nash $b-2C, b-2C$

## 2. Concepts of Liberalism and Axelrod's Assessment

International relations is the study of the interaction of state and non-state actors in international politics.<sup>52</sup> One philosophical camp within this field is liberalism. There are varieties of liberalism, but all share the common belief that the world is anarchical.<sup>53</sup> Anarchy in international relations does not mean chaos and disorder, but rather that state and non-state actors interact apart from a centralized, legitimate authority.<sup>54</sup> Unlike advocates of some other schools of thought, liberals believe that mutual cooperation is still possible—without an overarching world order—in a world of anarchy.<sup>55</sup> They also look at the world as non-zero sum. Because there is no world order, actors must adopt

<sup>51</sup>Sandler and Arce, "Terrorism and Game Theory," 187.

<sup>52</sup>"What Is International Relations?" Study.com, access July 24, 2015, <http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-international-relations.html>.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Daniel Drezner, *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 33.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 47.

measures, such as policies, that ensure their continued existence—and in doing so, state actors are better off than they would be without such policy coordination.<sup>56</sup>

International-relations scholar Robert Axelrod applies the prisoner's dilemma to state interactions in his book, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, and discovers several findings that support the liberal assumption that mutual cooperation between states exists without a central authority.<sup>57</sup> As a historical example, Axelrod cites the trench warfare of World War I, in which soldiers would refrain from shooting their adversaries provided that such restraint was reciprocated by the enemy.<sup>58</sup> Because of the reciprocity of interactions, it is best to elicit cooperation for the betterment of both sides.<sup>59</sup> This also applies to state interactions. Axelrod explains that the world is rarely like a game of football or chess, where there is one meeting, and, in the competition, a winner and loser, but rather, most situations involve multiple interactions. The world also differs from chess and football in that, in most situations, the end result is in non-zero sums.

In a collaborative piece with fellow liberal IR scholar Robert Keohane, Axelrod recognizes that international institutions play a significant role in achieving mutual cooperation among state actors: "Institutions can alter the extent to which governments expect their present actions to affect the behavior of others on future issues."<sup>60</sup> Institutions ensure reciprocal cooperation between state actors and deter uncooperative actions, like defection, when viewed through the scope of the prisoner's dilemma.<sup>61</sup> Axelrod notes that U.S. officials use reciprocity in trade relations, on the belief that it deters discrimination against American products by other countries and its neglect invites

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<sup>56</sup>Drezner, *Theories of International Politics*, 33.

<sup>57</sup>Axelrod, *Cooperation*, 20.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 73–87.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>60</sup>Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions," *World Politics* 38 no.1 (Oct. 1985), 226–254, 234, DOI: 10.2307/2010357.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 244.

retaliation by other state actors.<sup>62</sup> For Axelrod, institutional structures and concerns about future meetings help promote and safeguard mutual cooperation.<sup>63</sup>

Axelrod demonstrates the use of the prisoner's dilemma to explain how states and other actors can be encouraged to cooperate, despite the lack of a central authority enforcing such cooperation: "as long as the proper conditions are present, cooperation can get started, thrive, and prove stable."<sup>64</sup> Axelrod argues that reciprocity with another state is one of the main factors that make state-to-state interaction cooperative in a globalized world:

What makes it possible for cooperation to emerge is the fact that the players may meet again. This possibility means that choices made today not only determine the outcome of this move, but can also influence the later choices of the players. The future can therefore cast a shadow back upon the present and thereby affect the current strategic situation.<sup>65</sup>

The prisoner's dilemma may help us understand the factors that encourage mutual cooperation in areas as disparate as economics, science, and political science; it may also assist in understanding terroristic radicalization and de-radicalization theory.

## **F. METHOD AND OVERVIEW**

This thesis uses a comparative method in examining research on individuals who radicalize and become lone wolves. The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I contains an introduction, the research question, an explanation of the study's relevance, problems and hypotheses, the research method, a literature review, and a road map.

Chapters II, III, and IV present three case studies of lone-wolf terrorism from the United States and Britain: those of Major Nidal Hasan, perpetrator of the successful Fort Hood shooting in 2009; Mohamed Mohamud, who attempted the 2010 Portland car-bomb plot; and Maajid Nawaz, a former terrorist who de-radicalized. A structured comparison is employed across the cases.

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<sup>62</sup>Axelrod and Keohane, "Cooperation under Anarchy," 245.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 231–2.

<sup>64</sup>Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 22.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.

Each case study describes the individual's life, community, and turning point where they abandoned the community for terrorism—and, in the de-radicalization case, the reversal toward cooperation with the community. These factors are synthesized to provide an analysis according to the prisoner's dilemma. Scholarly material on the prevention of lone-wolf terrorism is assessed to determine whether the prisoner's dilemma offers significant new understanding.

Chapter V compares the case studies to detect common themes in radicalization and what local communities can do to discourage it. Chapter V concludes with a neoconservative counter-argument to the liberal approach and areas for further research.

## **G. SUMMARY**

Though the precursors to becoming a lone-wolf terrorist vary on a case-by-case basis, this study offers a potential framework for encouraging cooperation over defection. By applying the concepts of the prisoner's dilemma, this thesis may help analysts discern how a community's climate and responses affect an individual's decision to embrace radicalization. Even more broadly, it supports Horgan's argument that scholars and leaders "should never allow the complexity of terrorism to deter us from searching for practical solutions to its management."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 4.

## II. THE RADICALIZATION OF NIDAL HASAN AND HIS DEFECTION FROM THE ARMY

Men are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own minds.

—Franklin Delano Roosevelt<sup>67</sup>

Why do lone wolves radicalize?<sup>68</sup> When Timothy McVeigh bombed Oklahoma City in 1995, he stated that a motivating factor was that “based on observations of the policies of my own government, I viewed this action as an acceptable option.”<sup>69</sup> McVeigh, a Gulf War veteran, was referring to the government’s handling of the Branch Davidians, a religious group, during the Waco siege in 1993.<sup>70</sup> The siege involved a standoff between the sect and the ATF and FBI, who attempted to raid the group’s compound on grounds of weapons violations. The result was a gun battle and 51-day impasse,<sup>71</sup> culminating in the death of 76 people, including law enforcement and Branch Davidians, and the use of M-60 tanks and tear gas to breach the compound.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Quotes by Franklin Roosevelt, BrainyQuote, accessed February 24, 2015, [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/f/franklin\\_d\\_roosevelt.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/f/franklin_d_roosevelt.html).

<sup>68</sup>For more info on this topic, see Ramon Spaaij and Mark Hamm, “Key Issues and Research Agendas in Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2014, 3, <http://www.tandonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2014.986979#.VHznackrsd8>; Walter A. Lee, “Finding the wolves in sheep’s clothing: ways to distinguish and deter lone-wolf terrorists,” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), 6, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/45218>.

<sup>69</sup>Quotes by Timothy McVeigh, BrainyQuote, accessed February 24, 2015.

<sup>70</sup>Meredith L. Patten and Amanda S. Twilliger, “Waco: A Review of the Response by Law Enforcement,” in *A New Understanding of Terrorism: Case Studies, Trajectories, and Lessons Learned*, ed. M.R. Haberfeld and Agostino von Hassell (New York, NY: Springer Science and Business Media, LLC, 2009), 23–36.

<sup>71</sup>Dick J. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation*, (New York: Simon and Schuster Press, 1995), 13.

<sup>72</sup>Steven M. Chermak, Joshua D. Freilich, and Zachary Shemtob, “Law Enforcement Training and the Domestic Far Right,” *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, Vol. 36 No. 12, December 2009, 1313, <http://cjb.sagepub.com/content/36/12/1305.full.pdf>; Several analysts attribute the cause of the Waco Siege with the significance of the date April 20. For further information on this well-elaborated discourse, see: Janet Jensen, “Not the Jesus I Love,” *CJR* Volume 1, Issue 1, <http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/30859362/Not-the-Jesus-I-Love-Waco-Residents-Perception-of-the-Branch-Davidian-Conflict-by-Janet-Jensen.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1438810174&Signature=rbeFrDP5ijY%2FxFxWts%2Fu3Wo%2BuXmLc%3D&response-content-disposition=inline>; William Presson, “Enhancing Security – Projecting Civil Authority Into America’s Uncontrolled Spaces,” (master’s thesis, Sterling College of Kansas, 2012); Stuart A. Wright, *Patriots, Politics, and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4–5.

Today, Muslim Americans may hold adverse opinions about the U.S. government's military actions in the war on terrorism that radicalize them and cause them to attack their own communities. A case in point is Nidal Hasan. Seen in a superficial light, Hasan appeared to have everything going for him; he was a U.S. Army psychiatrist and medical corps officer who had risen through the ranks to major. But beneath his successful cooperation with the community was another side that would result in his turning against the community. In terms of the prisoner's dilemma, he defected, in the worst way imaginable.

This chapter examines Hasan's background and the situation between him and his community during the radicalization process. Next, it interprets the prisoner's dilemma through Hasan's perspective and, finally, through the perspective of the community.

## **A. BACKGROUND OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND IDENTIFYING THE COMMUNITY**

### **1. Early Life**

A second-generation immigrant, Nidal Malik Hasan was born in 1970 and raised in Arlington, Virginia. Though his parents left Palestine in the 1960s, following turmoil in the West Bank, Hasan and his siblings listed their nationality as Palestinian.<sup>73</sup> He was raised in a Muslim household, but was not devout during his childhood and through high school. Schoolmates attest that the only thing "fanatical" about young Hasan was his love for American football and the Washington Redskins.<sup>74</sup> He was described as a gentle, quiet, and deeply sensitive man. His uncle stated that he once raised a young bird that refused to eat—to feed the bird, he would place the food in his mouth to provide the bird

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<sup>73</sup>"Profile: Major Nidal Malik Hasan," BBC News, released October 12, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-11525580>.

<sup>74</sup>"Photo Essay: The Troubled Journey of Major Nidal Madik Hasan: An American Life," Time, 2009, accessed March 7, 2015, [http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1938816\\_1988806,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1938816_1988806,00.html).

with masticated food.<sup>75</sup> When it died, Hasan “mourned for two or three months, dug a grave for it and visited it.”<sup>76</sup>

Despite the opposition of his parents, Hasan saw a lot of opportunity in joining the U.S. Army. His cousin stated that Nidal’s argument to his parents was patriotic: ““No, I was born and raised here[;] I’m going to do my duty to the country.””<sup>77</sup> Little is known as to the nature of his parents’ objections, only that they preferred he took a different route in life. Hasan had ambitions of going to college, and joining the military would allow him both to serve his country and fund his education.<sup>78</sup> Weighing the pros and cons, he joined the military community by enlisting in the armed forces immediately after graduating high school in 1988.

## **2. Community Influence**

Hasan remained with the army community until his defection to radicalism. As an enlisted soldier stationed at Fort Irwin, Hasan attended community college in Barstow, California, through 1989.<sup>79</sup> Education remained important to him, and he balanced his working life and educational aspirations throughout his career. His various credits from assorted community colleges throughout the United States allowed him to graduate from West Virginia Community College, summa cum laude, in 1992.<sup>80</sup>

Hasan continued his education, using the G.I. bill to attend Virginia Tech University. He also remained devoted to his community, the military, by attending the Army ROTC program as an undergraduate.<sup>81</sup> He graduated with honors from Virginia

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<sup>75</sup>James C. McKinley and James Dao, “Fort Hood Gunman Gave Signals Before His Rampage,” *New York Times*, November 8, 2009, accessed March 13, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/09/us/09reconstruct.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup>“The Life and Career of Major Hasan,” *New York Times*, November 7, 2009, accessed March 13, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/11/07/us/20091107-HASAN-TIMELINE.html?\\_r=1&#/#time51\\_1794](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/11/07/us/20091107-HASAN-TIMELINE.html?_r=1&#/#time51_1794).

<sup>78</sup>“Who is Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan?” *ABC News*, November 12, 2009, accessed March 13, 2015, <http://www.wfaa.com/story/local/2015/03/12/13530754/>.

<sup>79</sup>“The Life and Career of Major Hasan,” *New York Times*.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup>“Who is Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan?” *ABC News*.

Tech in 1995 with a degree in biochemistry and rejoined the army immediately after graduation to continue serving his country.

Hasan took his educational aspirations a step further by enrolling in the very selective medical-school program of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) to pursue a career in psychiatry.<sup>82</sup> Hasan finished his medical degree in 2001 and subsequently owed time to the military community, which had paid for his advanced education.

### **3. Extremist Radicalization Influence**

Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt argue that self-identification with extremism begins when individuals reach a certain crossroads—specifically, when an individual becomes vulnerable through an economic, social, political, or personal crisis.<sup>83</sup> For Hasan, that crossroads was the death of his mother. He had coped with the death of his father in 1998, but took her death in 2001 very hard.<sup>84</sup> Research indicates that when individuals endure an extreme hardship, some turn to religion to keep moving forward; “findings support the idea that belief in supernatural agency is a core response to the human awareness of mortality.”<sup>85</sup> His vulnerability led Hasan closer to his family’s religion, Islam, and opened him to ideas he may not have considered before. Up until 2001, his peers and associates considered Hasan a moderate in his religion, and he had not expressed anti-American sentiment.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>“Details emerge about Fort Hood suspect’s history,” *ABC News*, November 6, 2009, 2015, <http://www.wkyt.com/news/headlines/69403367.html>.

<sup>83</sup>Silber and Bhatt, “Radicalization,” 32.

<sup>84</sup>“The Life and Career of Major Hasan,” *New York Times*.

<sup>85</sup>Susan Kwirecki, *Becoming Religious: Understanding Devotion to the Unseen*, (Associated University Presses: New Jersey, 1999), 17; Ara Norenzayan and Ian Hansen, “Belief in Supernatural Agents in the Face of Death,” *Personality and Psychology Bulletin*, University of British Columbia, 185, <http://psp.sagepub.com/content/32/2/174.full.pdf>.

<sup>86</sup>“Who is Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan?” *ABC News*.



The imam of the mosque that Hasan began to attend in Falls Church, Virginia, was Anwar al-Awlaki, later to be known as the Osama Bin Laden of the Internet.<sup>87</sup> Hasan met al-Awlaki in 2001 after the death of his mother, and their friendship grew while Hasan was stationed in Virginia. Al-Awlaki had become a great orator in his youth, seeking to reinvigorate Islam for English-speaking Muslims. His early work exhibited no calls for violence and little politicization of Islam; through this work, he gained a considerable following.<sup>88</sup>

By the time Hasan met him, al-Awlaki had become radicalized<sup>89</sup> and his main task on behalf of Al Qaeda was to convince Western Muslims that their governments were actively engaged in a war against Islam and them personally.<sup>90</sup> He was most effective when he took to social media: “The most effective delivery of Awlaki’s message has been through the Internet ... expertly harnessed by al-Qaeda ... to achieve maximum penetration of, and impact within, Western societies.”<sup>91</sup> Al-Awlaki’s connections around the world via social media have linked him to a number of terrorist attacks in recent years, including the 2005 London bombings, the 2007 Fort Dix attack plot, and the attempted Christmas bombing of Detroit in 2009.<sup>92</sup> Because Hasan had such a deep respect for al-Awlaki’s teachings, the two kept in touch after al-Awlaki left Falls Church, and his preaching continued to influence in Hasan’s radicalization.

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<sup>87</sup>Brian Ross and Lee Ferran, “How Anwar Al-Awlaki Inspired Terror from Across the Globe,” *ABC News*, September 30, 2011, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/anwar-al-awlaki-inspired-terror/story?id=14643383>.

<sup>88</sup>Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, “As American as Apple Pie, How Anwar al-Awlaki Became the Face of Western Jihad,” *The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence*, 2011, 25, <http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/1315827595ICSRPaperAsAmericanAsApplePieHowAnwaralAwlakiBecameTheFaceofWesternJihad.pdf>.

<sup>89</sup>Scott Shane and Souad Mekhennet, “Imam’s Path From Condemning Terror to Preaching Jihad,” *New York Times*, May 8, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/09/world/09awlaki.html?pagewanted=5&hp&r=0>; Kathrine Zimmerman, “Militant Islam’s Global Preacher: The Radicalizing Effect of Sheikh Anwar al Awlaki,” *Critical Threats*, March 12, 2010, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/militant-islams-global-preacher-radicalizing-effect-sheikh-anwar-al-awlaki>.

<sup>90</sup>Meleagrou-Hitchens, “Face of Western Jihad,” 9.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, 83–90.

As Hasan's communications with al-Awlaki continued, he began to show signs of disgruntlement with his community's actions in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>93</sup> Soldiers who went to school with Hasan reported that he attempted to preach against the "U.S. war against Islam" during a class in environmental health. The presentation, entitled "The Quranic World View as It Relates to Muslims in the U.S. Military," argued that Muslims who serve in the U.S. military should have the right to conscientious objection to fighting in Islamic countries.<sup>94</sup> The final trigger that led him to terrorism against his community was an order to deploy to Afghanistan in 2009, while stationed in Fort Hood.<sup>95</sup>

Hasan arrived in Fort Hood, Texas, in 2008. His relationship with Anwar al-Awlaki persisted, and his views towards the army community grew more negative. Al-Awlaki and Hasan exchanged twenty emails from December 2008 through June of 2009.<sup>96</sup> Awlaki explained that violent jihad, "is the only course of action which al-Qaeda's Islam demands upon its followers in order to protect it from this onslaught ... violent jihad is currently a defensive measure, no matter where it is carried out."<sup>97</sup> He would further state to Hasan that "[f]ighting against the U.S. army is an Islamic duty today."<sup>98</sup> Hasan had grown accustomed to al-Awlaki's preaching of the downtrodden Islamist and explained to Hasan between 2001–2009 that the U.S. Army was not the community where he belonged. This came to a head when he found out that he would be deployed as a medic in the Middle East, against the forces of al-Qaeda.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>"Life and Career Nidal Hasan," *New York Times*.

<sup>94</sup>"Photo Essay: The Troubled Journey of Major Nidal Madik Hasan: Interning at Walter Reed," *TIME*, 2009, accessed March 27, 2014, [http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1938816\\_1988823,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1938816_1988823,00.html).

<sup>95</sup>"Final Report of the William H. Webster Commission on The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Counter-terrorism Intelligence, and the Events at Fort Hood, Texas, on November 5, 2009," accessed March 24, 2015, 1, <http://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/final-report-of-the-william-h.-webster-commission>.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>97</sup>Meleagrou-Hitchens, "Face of Western Jihad," 82.

<sup>98</sup>Sudarsan Raghavan, "Cleric says he was confidant to Hasan," *Washington Post*, November 16, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/15/AR2009111503160.html>.

<sup>99</sup>"Cousin Says Suspected Fort Hood Gunman Feared Impending War Deployment," *Fox News*, released November 05, 2009, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2009/11/05/cousin-says-suspected-fort-hood-gunman-feared-impending-war-deployment/>.

## **B. INTERPRETATION OF THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA THROUGH HASAN'S PERSPECTIVE**

In Hasan's earlier years, from his initial enlistment in 1988 through his mother's death and the events of 9/11, he was extremely committed to the military community. Hasan wanted to serve his country diligently via the armed forces. He believed his community returned his cooperation by paying him back with work experience and education. Through his work within the military community, Hasan had attained his personal goals of higher education, with an associate's degree in science (AS), bachelor's degree in science (BS), and a doctorate in osteopathy for psychiatry (OD).

The relationship between Hasan and the U.S. Army had been one of mutual cooperation and support, providing gains to each side. In terms of the prisoner's dilemma, this mutual cooperation, consisting of Hasan's contributions within the military community—represented by the number 3—and the community's giving Hasan career opportunities for being a constructive part of the community—also represented by a 3 in the upper-left quadrant—is illustrated in Table 5. Each side gains from cooperation, and the overall value of the relationship, which is represented by the total numerical value achieved (6), is higher than the overall value that would be possible in any other relationship between the two.

Table 5. Hasan's Interpretation of his Community from 1988–2001

		Hasan's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
U.S. Army's Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3 ✓, ✓	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

After losing his mother, sitting under the preaching of Anwar al-Awlaki, and watching the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and on terrorism overall, Hasan's views of his community began to drastically change. At the same time, after 9/11, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported a 1,700 percent increase in alleged hate crimes against Muslim Americans between 2000 and 2001.<sup>100</sup>

This discontent made its way to Hasan within the community. Relatives claimed “that [Hasan] was subjected to increasingly ugly taunts about his religion and ethnicity from other soldiers after the September 11 attacks.”<sup>101</sup> In an interview, Hasan's cousin stated that after the events of 9/11, Hasan was harassed because of his ethnicity and was called by some individuals a “camel jockey;”<sup>102</sup> though these taunts are not indicative of the army as a whole, the actions of a few shook Hasan's view of his community. He began to feel the army was not where he belonged.

<sup>100</sup>Mussarat Khan, “Attitudes Toward Muslim Americans Post-9/11,” *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 7, no. 1(2012), DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.10381607.0007.101>.

<sup>101</sup>Philip Sherwell and Alex Spillius, “Fort Hood shooting: Texas army killer linked to September 11 terrorists,” *The Telegraph*, November 7, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/6521758/Fort-Hood-shooting-Texas-army-killer-linked-to-September-11-terrorists.html>.

<sup>102</sup>“Fort Hood, TX Shooting Case Study,” *Center for Personal Protection and Safety*, accessed March 31, 2015, 4, <http://www.cpps.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Fort-Hood-Case-Study-FINAL.pdf>.

By 2004, he began to feel dissatisfied with the army and its perceived anti-Muslim sentiment and claims to have sought legal advice to secure a discharge.<sup>103</sup> The Army disputes that any such effort was made.<sup>104</sup> His antagonistic feelings toward his community were re-enforced by the extremist preaching of Anwar al-Awlaki. By 2002, al-Awlaki declared himself disgusted with the United States government's treatment of Muslim Americans; meanwhile, he moved to the United Kingdom to spread the idea there and to his followers in the United States, via social media, that Muslims were at war with the West: "[H]is message was more conspiratorial. You can't believe CNN, the United Nations, or Amnesty International, he told his students, because they, too, were part of the war on Islam."<sup>105</sup>

From the perspective of Hasan, at this point he wanted out of the military community, which he believed was waging what al-Awlaki called the war against Islam. Though his community had allowed Hasan to pursue an education and attain a doctorate, his career within the community was now superseded by the calling of his religion.<sup>106</sup> Hasan reasoned that by offering to pay back what he owed for his education, he could leave the army to sort out his thoughts.<sup>107</sup> This community, however, could not let simply him leave; according to army rules, he must remain in service for the time invested attaining his doctorate. Hasan concluded that he had no choice but to remain with the community. In his perception, the military was getting the sucker's pay-off within the prisoner's dilemma, as indicated in Table 6. To Hasan, the community was exploiting his services—represented by a 5 in the bottom-left quadrant—while he felt it was his right to be a conscientious observer in the perceived war on Islam.

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<sup>103</sup>"Aunt: Fort Hood shooting suspect asked for discharge," AZCentral.com, November 5, 2009, <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2009/11/05/20091105hasanprofile-CR.html>.

<sup>104</sup>"Life and Career Nidal Hasan," *New York Times*.

<sup>105</sup>Shane and Mekhennet, "Preaching Jihad," *New York Times*; Meleagrou-Hitchens, "Face of Western Jihad," 28.

<sup>106</sup>"Anwar Awlaki Email Exchange With Fort Hood Shooter Nidal Hasan," *IntelWire*, July 19, 2012, <http://news.intelwire.com/2012/07/the-following-emails-between-maj.html>.

<sup>107</sup>"Life and Career Nidal Hasan," *New York Times*.

Table 6. Hasan's Interpretation of his Community from 2001–2008

		Hasan's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
U.S. Army's Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5 ✓, ✓	Mutual Defection 0, 0

After Hasan had given up seeking an exemption for his time in service, he maintained outward cooperation with a community he did not support. The army, from Hasan's perspective, was abusive in keeping him in the community. Over the course of the war on terrorism, Hasan's sentiments hardened into radicalization.

By 2009, Hasan decided he could no longer be a conscientious observer of the war; he was at war, and on the wrong side. Through his online conversations with al-Awlaki, he came to believe that it was his duty to kill as many soldiers in Fort Hood as possible in the name of Allah. He began expressing these sentiments online, comparing suicide bombers with American soldiers who throw themselves on grenades to save their comrades.<sup>108</sup> He also began donating much of his pay to Islamist "charities" that in reality funded terrorist organizations.<sup>109</sup> In one of Hasan's later emails to al-Awlaki, he told him he could not wait to join him in the "afterlife."<sup>110</sup> In August 2009, he purchased

<sup>108</sup>"The Life and Career of Major Hasan," *New York Times*.

<sup>109</sup>Brian Ross and Rhonda Schwartz, "Major Hasan's Email: 'I Can't Wait to Join You' in Afterlife," *ABC News*, November 19, 2009, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/major-hasans-mail-wait-join-afterlife/story?id=9130339>.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*

a FN Herstal five-seven tactical pistol, a light, small firearm capable of thirty-one rounds before reloading—a gun nicknamed the “cop killer.”<sup>111</sup>

For Hasan, there was no turning back. He believed the community he once admired, and was grateful to for making it the man he was, now despised him, as shown by its war on Islam. On November 5, 2009, Hasan entered the Fort Hood army base, shouted “Allahu akbar”—“Allah is greater”—and opened fire in the soldier-readiness center.<sup>112</sup> He shot as many individuals as possible until apprehended, killing thirteen people and injuring more than thirty.<sup>113</sup> Hasan’s perspective of being at war with his former community is expressed in Table 7. Both sides of the relationship had “defected” from any shared sense of cooperation. Hasan believed he was gaining nothing by cooperating with the enemy, as represented by a 0 in the lower-right quadrant. He further believed the community had done nothing to work with him to avoid radicalization. Though Hasan had become more and more blatant in his disgruntlement, members of his community did not report his negative behavior to other government organizations like the FBI. The community’s perspective is discussed in Section C.

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<sup>111</sup>Matthew Cole, Pierre Thomas, Jason Ryan, and Richard Esposito, “‘Cop Killer’ Gun Used in Ft Hood Shooting, Officials Said,” *ABC News*, November 6, 2009, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/cop-killer-gun-thought-ft-hood-shooting/story?id=9019521>.

<sup>112</sup>“Fort Hood soldier: I ‘started doing what I was trained to do,’” *CNN News*, November 9, 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/11/09/fort.hood.foster/>.

<sup>113</sup>Josh Rubin and Matt Smith, “‘I am the shooter,’ Nidal Hasan tells Fort Hood court-martial,” *CNN News*, updated August 6, 2013, [http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/06/justice/hasan-court-martial/index.html?hpt=hp\\_t2](http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/06/justice/hasan-court-martial/index.html?hpt=hp_t2); “Final Report of the William H. Webster Commission on The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Counter-terrorism Intelligence, and the Events at Fort Hood, Texas, on November 5, 2009,” accessed April 9, 2015, 1, <http://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/final-report-of-the-william-h.-webster-commission>.

Table 7. Hasan's Interpretation of his Community by 2009

		Hasan's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
U.S. Army's Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0 ✓, ✓

After the massacre at Fort Hood, Hasan showed no remorse for the people he murdered. Testimony from his trial indicates that the attack was intended to defend the terrorists whom these victims would potentially fight.<sup>114</sup> Al-Alwaki commented that Hasan “is a man of conscience who could not bear living the contradiction of being a Muslim and serving in an army that is fighting against his own people.”<sup>115</sup>

What could Hasan's community have done to prevent his lone-wolf radicalization? Or, at the very least, to report his suspicious behavior? To understand the other side of this dilemma, it is necessary to review the perspective of the military community that Hasan once reveled in being a part of.

<sup>114</sup>Billy Kenber, “Nidal Hasan sentenced to death for the Fort Hood shooting rampage,” *The Washington Post*, August 28, 2013, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/nidal-hasan-sentenced-to-death-for-fort-hood-shooting-rampage/2013/08/28/aad28de2-0ffa-11e3-bdf6-e4fc677d94a1\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/nidal-hasan-sentenced-to-death-for-fort-hood-shooting-rampage/2013/08/28/aad28de2-0ffa-11e3-bdf6-e4fc677d94a1_story.html).

<sup>115</sup>“The Life and Career of Major Hasan,” *New York Times*.



### **C. PRISONER’S DILEMMA FROM THE COMMUNITY’S PERSPECTIVE**

The U.S. Army, as a community, takes in all walks of life for its service. Its mission is to serve as a land branch for the armed forces in the Department of Defense (DOD).<sup>116</sup> It is a purely volunteer system, and no one joins without willingly deciding to do so. Its chain of command descends ultimately from the leadership of the president of the United States. Promotion through the ranks and access to education are based on individual merit and ability to manage the workloads pressed by commands within the community. When Hasan enlisted in 1988 as an infantryman, he represented everything the community desired: he wanted to serve his country and he had educational aspirations that could help the community in the long run if he chose to stay in. Hasan took advantage of the GI bill to further his education and affirmed his desire to stay with the community by commissioning as an officer after his time at Virginia Tech, eventually entering the USUHS for psychiatry.

From 1988 to his mother’s death and the September 11th attack, Hasan and his community sides were “mutually cooperative”—represented by a 3 for both members in the upper-left quadrant of Table 8. The community gave Hasan the career and educational opportunities he sought, and Hasan served the community to the standards requested.

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<sup>116</sup>“10 USC 3062: Policy; composition; organized peace establishment,” U.S. House of Representatives, accessed April 7, 2015, <http://uscodebeta.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title10-section3062&num=0&edition=prelim>.

Table 8. Community's Interpretation of Hasan from 1988–2001

		Hasan's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
U.S. Army's Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3 ✓, ✓	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

In the aftermath of 9/11, the president announced that the attack was orchestrated by Osama bin Laden and the terrorist regime al-Qaeda, and that their actions constituted an act of war against the United States and the community of the army that served this nation. Though al-Qaeda is based on extreme principles of Islam, President George W. Bush made clear that the war on terrorism was not a war against a religion: “Ours is a war not against a religion, not against the Muslim faith. But ours is a war against individuals who absolutely hate what America stands for.”<sup>117</sup> Though the war on terrorism was not outwardly anti-racial or anti-religious on the surface, it did not stop negative public perceptions toward Muslim Americans throughout the United States. This included Muslim-American service members in the army.

As stated above, from 2000 to 2001, “hate crimes against Muslim-Americans skyrocketed by 1,700 percent.”<sup>118</sup> To prevent unfair treatment within the armed forces, the community provides avenues for its members to mitigate any sort of racial or hate crimes. Within every unit of every command is an equal-opportunity (EO) representative who is trained and certified to focus on sexual harassment, assault mitigation, and racial

<sup>117</sup>“The President’s Quotes on Islam,” *The White House*, accessed April 7, 2015, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/ramadan/islam.html>.

<sup>118</sup>Khan, “Attitudes Toward Muslim Americans,” *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*.

and religious tolerance. The EO representatives report up their chain and to their commanders any possible violations.

Also within every command is a command chaplain, whose responsibility is to provide confidential advice and best adherence when dealing with any sort of problem. If someone lacks good rapport with these individuals, he may bypass them and go directly to the commanding officer (CO) to report any discrimination he might feel. If he is not comfortable with such confrontation, or if the CO is part of the problem, the individual may go above the CO and lodge complaints directly through to the inspector general (IG) if the problem is spread throughout the command. If the discrimination is so bad that the complainant cannot wait for the IG, he may bypass the system and contact his member of Congress.<sup>119</sup> The community claims that Hasan followed none of these options.<sup>120</sup>

Despite providing elaborate means for Hassan or any service member to take action, the community failed to take action itself in the face of Hasan's apparent radicalization, when it became obvious that his personality and work ethic had changed. Two officers who worked with Hasan during his medical residency and fellowship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center described him as "a ticking time bomb."<sup>121</sup> At various times while he was at Walter Reed, Hasan suggested revenge might excuse the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and expressed sympathy with violent Islamist extremists and bin Laden. "As the officer who assigned Hassan to Fort Hood (and later decided to deploy Hasan to Afghanistan) admitted to an officer at Fort Hood, 'you're getting our worst.'"<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>"Military Discharges and Military Counseling," *GI Rights Hotline*, accessed April 9, 2015, <http://girishtshotline.org/en/military-knowledge-base/topic/grievances-and-filing-complaints>.

<sup>120</sup>"The Life and Career of Major Hasan," *New York Times*.

<sup>121</sup>Joseph I. Lieberman and Susan M. Collins, "A Ticking Time Bomb, Counterterrorism Lessons from the U.S. Government's Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack," U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, February 2011, [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2011/ft-hood\\_hsga\\_special-report.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2011/ft-hood_hsga_special-report.htm).

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*

The Washington Field Office (WFO) queried FBI and DOD databases from the personnel within Hasan's community and determined that he was not a threat.<sup>123</sup> Throughout the transformation of Hasan, the community optimistically and unrealistically overlooked his changing work ethic and attitude toward his community and colleagues. The personnel at Walter Reed did little about it except pass him on as a problem to his next command at the Darnell Army Medical Center in Fort Hood, Texas. Because the community took no steps to avoid Hasan's radicalization and did not report his troubling behavior to other government institutions, such as the FBI, both sides were mutually unbeneficial, represented by 0's in Table 9.

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<sup>123</sup>“Final Report of the William H. Webster Commission on The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Counter-terrorism Intelligence, and the Events at Fort Hood, Texas, on November 5, 2009,” accessed April 9, 2015, 1, <http://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/final-report-of-the-william-h.-webster-commission>.

Table 9. Community's Interpretation of Hasan from 2001–2008

		Hasan's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
U.S. Army's Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0 ✓, ✓

While Hasan was in Fort Hood in October 2009, the community issued orders that he would deploy in November to Afghanistan. Upon this perceived provocation, Hasan entered the base and opened fire.<sup>124</sup> From the community's perspective, Hasan was able to commit a successful terrorist attack—represented by a 5 for Hasan—that took it completely unawares. This sucker's pay-off against the community is recorded in the upper-right quadrant of Table 10.

<sup>124</sup>“Counter-terrorism Intelligence, and the Events at Fort Hood,” 1.

Table 10. Community's Interpretation of Hasan by 2009

		Hasan's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
U.S. Army's Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0 ✓, ✓
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

#### D. SUMMARY

The case of Nidal Hasan demonstrates the unique nature of lone-wolf terrorist radicalization, from the community's perspective. For years, Hasan had exhibited personality changes that his local community and superiors officially overlooked. Discontent toward the Muslim-American public after 9/11 resonated with Hasan, and the death of family members drove him to religion in troubled times. The radical preaching of Anwar al-Awlaki damaged his perception of his local community and the country he once loved serving.

During this period, Hasan believed that he had no one within his community to turn to. Nor were there institutions—or an equally charismatic counter-narrative—that could neutralize the allure of al-Awlaki's preaching. Worse, Hasan's extremist personality grew evident among his colleagues over the years, and they did little to help him or intervene. In the end, their inactivity in failing to say or do something contributed to Hasan's lone-wolf attack.

### III. THE RADICALIZATION OF MOHAMED OSMAN MOHAMUD AND THE MUTUAL DEFECTION OF THE COMMUNITY

Political leaders still think things can be done through force, but that cannot solve terrorism. Backwardness is the breeding ground of terror, and that is what we have to fight.

—Mikhail Gorbachev<sup>125</sup>

Nidal Hasan, like other Muslim Americans, had experiences and grievances that put him at odds with his local community, in his own estimation, and made radicalization appealing. This problem confronts not only adults like Hasan, but also teens and young adults.<sup>126</sup> For young Muslim Americans who feel like outsiders within their own community, terrorist radicalization can reduce feelings of alienation as they join a cause larger than themselves. The community may respond by giving up on these at-risk individuals and subsequently report them to government entities such as the FBI. An example of this dilemma is the radicalization of Mohamed Osman Mohamud. What distinguishes Mohamud from Hasan, however, is that Mohamud's community discovered his defection and prevented him from harming anyone except himself.

This chapter contains three parts. First, it examines the Mohamed Mohamud's background, leading up to his radicalization and the situation between him and his community when ideas of terrorism arose. Next, it interprets the prisoner's dilemma through the perspective of Mohamud; finally, it looks at the prisoner's dilemma through the perspective of the community.

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<sup>125</sup>Terrorism Quotes, BrainyQuote, accessed June 1, 2015, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/terrorism.html>.

<sup>126</sup>Alan Singer, "Why Teens Become Terrorists and What School Can Do," *Huffington Post*, February 17, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alan-singer/why-teens-become-terroris b\\_6697476.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alan-singer/why-teens-become-terroris b_6697476.html).

## A. BACKGROUND AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE COMMUNITY

### 1. Early Life and Community Influence

Mohamud was born in Somalia in 1991, but emigrated with his parents at a very young age to become a naturalized U.S. citizen. He grew up in Beaverton, Oregon, a suburb of Portland, where his family moved so that Mohamud could receive a Western education and his father would have better professional opportunities (Mr. Mohamud worked for Intel as an engineer).<sup>127</sup> The family observed Muslim customs and holidays.<sup>128</sup> Young Mohamud was religious, but didn't attend mosque consistently.<sup>129</sup>

Mohamud graduated from Westview High School and began taking classes at Oregon State University in Corvallis. Classmates under the same imam in Corvallis thought of him as just a "normal student" who went to athletic events, drank an occasional beer, and was into rap music and culture.<sup>130</sup> "He wasn't the most social person, but he wasn't anti-social," said Omar Mohamed, president of the Muslim Student Association. "He seemed like a pretty normal guy."<sup>131</sup> While at Oregon State in 2009, he was accused of, but not charged with, date-raping an intoxicated woman on campus.<sup>132</sup> Around this time, Mohamud's parents divorced. In 2010, Mohamud left school without declaring a major.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>127</sup>Colin Miner, Liz Robbins, and Erik Eckholm, "F.B.I. Says Oregon Suspect Planned 'Grand' Attack," *The New York Times*, November 27, 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/us/28portland.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/us/28portland.html?_r=0).

<sup>128</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup>"Bomb suspect to classmate: 'I hate Americans,'" *NBC News*, November 28, 2010, [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/40402994/ns/us\\_news-security/#.VW3loXmUOUl](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/40402994/ns/us_news-security/#.VW3loXmUOUl).

<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup>Bob Drogen and April Choi, "Teen Held in Alleged Portland Bomb Plot," *Los Angeles Times*, November 28, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/nov/28/nation/la-na-portland-bomb-plot-20101128>.

<sup>132</sup>"Oregon Bomber Suspect Had Date Rape Accusation," *CBS News*, November 29, 2010, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/oregon-bomber-suspect-had-date-rape-accusation/>.

<sup>133</sup>"Bomb suspect to classmate," *NBC News*.



## 2. Extremist Influences

By the age of 19, Mohamud was a college dropout with separated parents. He had few friends growing up and, presumably to bolster his self-esteem, began to reach out to terrorist organizations in an attempt to belong to a larger cause.<sup>134</sup> He began the transition to extremism by writing physical fitness articles for the magazine, *Jihad Recollections*. In one of these articles, he recommends Pilates training for those physically preparing for jihad. He also wrote an article for the extremist magazine, *Inspire*, a media arm of Al Qaeda.<sup>135</sup> Radicalization was a short process for Mohamud; he quickly expressed a desire to be directly involved in the terrorist cause.<sup>136</sup>

To join an organization, Mohamud began to email an individual named Abdulhadi. Mohamud had heard of Abdulhadi while in college and knew of him as a charismatic recruiter. Abdulhadi had since left Oregon to travel to Yemen and Pakistan.<sup>137</sup> Mohamud began to contact him in Pakistan as he attempted to join others involved in terrorism.<sup>138</sup> After he repeatedly failed to contact a third party for assistance in getting to Pakistan, the FBI spoofed Abdulhadi's email address and contacted Mohamud.<sup>139</sup> FBI officials were "tipped from someone concerned about him" and intercepted an email exchange between Mohamud and the recruiter in Pakistan.<sup>140</sup> According to his arrest warrant, in an email intended for Abdulhadi, Mohamud reiterated his interest in committing violent jihad in his local community:

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<sup>134</sup>Bryan Coultas, "Crowdsourcing intelligence to combat terrorism: harnessing bottom-up collection to prevent lone-wolf terror attacks," (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015) 29–30, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/45174>.

<sup>135</sup>Drogin and Choi, "Teen Held in Alleged Portland Bomb Plot."

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup>"Bomb suspect to classmate," *NBC News*.

<sup>139</sup>Coultas, "Combat Terrorism," 30; U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, "Arrest Warrant: United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud," November 26, 2010, 3, [http://media.oregonlive.com/portland\\_impact/other/USAFFIDAVIT.pdf](http://media.oregonlive.com/portland_impact/other/USAFFIDAVIT.pdf).

<sup>140</sup>Drogin and Choi, "Teen Held in Alleged Portland Bomb Plot."

oh nice, make lots of [prayer] for me, make [prayer] that I will be the one to open Al Quds and make [prayer] that I will be a martyr in the highest chambers of paradise.<sup>141</sup>

After intercepting Mohamud's email correspondence, the FBI put him on the no-fly list. Mohamud attempted to travel to Kodiak, Alaska, from Portland International Airport, but he was prevented and interrogated by the FBI. Mohamud admitted that he intended to earn money fishing, then to travel to Yemen to visit a friend, but said he had not obtained a visa for Yemen.<sup>142</sup> Mohamud lamented in an email that he believed being placed on the no-fly list was his parents' doing, because they were holding him back from terrorist radicalization.<sup>143</sup> "I was betrayed by my family; I was supposed to travel last year, but Allah had decreed that I stay here longer ... To my parents, who held me back from jihad . . . If you make allies with the enemy, then Allah's power will ask you about that on the day of judgment."<sup>144</sup>

The FBI, continuing under the guise of Abdulhadi, emailed Mohamud and recommended that he meet with a terrorist group in the Oregon area. Mohamud traveled to meet with the "terrorists" in downtown Portland in July 2010; unbeknownst to him, they were undercover FBI agents. Asked what he would do for the jihadist cause, Mohamud replied he "could do anything."<sup>145</sup> Mohamud had a second face-to-face meeting with undercover agents in Portland in August 2010, during which he expressed a desire to attack during the Christmas-tree lighting in Portland on November 26th.<sup>146</sup> The agents asked Mohamud whether he cared that an attack on an event like that would kill women and children. He replied with the following statement:

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<sup>141</sup>U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, "Arrest Warrant," 10.

<sup>142</sup>Caryn Brooks, "Portland's Bomb Plot: Who is Mohamed Mohamud?" *TIME*, November 28, 2010, <http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2033372,00.html>; U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, "Arrest Warrant," 10.

<sup>143</sup>Kari Olechowicz and Jonathan Matusitz, "The Motivations of Islamic Martyrs: Applying the Collective Effort Model," Springer Science + Business Media, New York, September 19, 2013, 342, DOI: 10.1007/s12144-013-9187-0.

<sup>144</sup>Brooks, "Portland's Bomb Plot," *TIME*.

<sup>145</sup>U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, "Arrest Warrant," 13.

<sup>146</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

Allah (may He be glorified and exalted) is always looking at me, but imagine every day we see you know in our, you know, newspapers and news you know our people are killed you know. So for us to see that you know it would be a smile from me to see them in the same ... you know, you know what I like, what makes me happy? You know, what I like to see? Is when I see the enemy of Allah then you know their bodies are torn everywhere. Like, like when I see the (UI).<sup>147</sup>

As Mohamud continued to coordinate an attack on the lighting ceremony, his plans changed from him ramming a van with explosives into the crowd to detonating the van with a cell-phone call. He preferred that option since martyrdom required the “highest level of faith” and he was concerned that living in the United States and attending a Western university had tainted him in some way.<sup>148</sup>

On the day of the attack, Mohamud twice affirmed that he wanted to go on it and smiled when he learned that more than 25,000 people would attend the ceremony.<sup>149</sup> On the night of the attack, Mohamud attempted to detonate the van by dialing the cell-phone number. When the device failed to explode, his “accomplice” recommended he try to dial the number again outside, for better service.<sup>150</sup> As he exited the van, he was arrested by the FBI. Mohamud was subsequently charged with and found guilty of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction. He was sentenced to thirty years in federal prison and lifetime supervision upon his release in 2040.<sup>151</sup>

## **B. INTERPRETATION OF THE PRISONER’S DILEMMA THROUGH MOHAMUD’S PERSPECTIVE**

While Mohamud was being surveilled by the FBI, he admitted that he had felt extremist tendencies as early as fifteen years old. In discussing potential attacks with undercover agents, he lamented: “Since I was fifteen, you know, I, since I was fifteen I

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<sup>147</sup>U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, “Arrest Warrant,” 19.

<sup>148</sup>*Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>149</sup>*Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>150</sup>Jerry Markon, “FBI foils elaborate bomb plot in Oregon,” *The Washington Post*, November 28, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/27/AR2010112700546.html?sid=ST2010112704380>.

<sup>151</sup>Helen Jung, “Mohamed Mohamud sentenced to 30 years in prison for tree-lighting bomb plot,” *The Oregonian*, October 1, 2014, [http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2014/10/mohamed\\_mohamud\\_sentenced\\_for.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2014/10/mohamed_mohamud_sentenced_for.html)

thought about all this things before .... Because if you were going to [Paradise] you wouldn't have to worry, right?"<sup>152</sup> In terms of analysis, this statement is either an extreme position for a Western-raised fifteen-year-old or a lie.

It is difficult to ascertain whether Mohamud was making this kind of statement to impress individuals he thought were fellow terrorists, or simply exaggerating. Interviews with people who said they knew Mohamud at fifteen cited little inclination towards jihadist tendencies.<sup>153</sup> Either way, this thesis takes Mohamud at his word—that he desired to radicalize by the time in his mid-teens.

This viewpoint is particularly striking because Mohamud enjoyed the benefits of living in a Western society—such as a Western education.<sup>154</sup> His parents provided Mohamud with a higher quality of life in Oregon than they could have had in Somalia, a state in a deadly civil war at the time.<sup>155</sup> Mohamud's defection from society and his desire to become a terrorist while his community was trying to cooperate and work with him is reflected in the upper-right quadrant of Table 11. He believed he would benefit from defecting from his community (as represented by a 5), while his community would gain nothing (represented by a 0).

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<sup>152</sup>U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, "Arrest Warrant," 19.

<sup>153</sup>Miner, Robbins, and Eckholm, "Oregon Suspect Planned 'Grand' Attack," *New York Times*.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid.

<sup>155</sup>Brooks, "Portland's Bomb Plot," *TIME*.

Table 11. Mohamud's Interpretation of his Community Prior to College

		Mohamud's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0 ✓, ✓
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

In college, Mohamud took his extremist tendencies to the next level, emailing individuals associated with terrorist organizations and writing for terrorist magazines. He tried to leave his local community and fly to Yemen, an action prevented by his being placed on the no-fly list.

Mohamud perceived his persistent emailing to recruiters as having paid off when he was put in contact with terrorists in the Portland area. These “terrorists” asked his intentions on numerous occasions, and whether he should consider other options like prayer. But Mohamud remained relentless in inflicting terror on his local community.

Mohamud believed he that he was working for something bigger than himself. He thought his fellow terrorists were assisting him in his ability to hurt his community, in ways he had only dreamed of. He also believed he was planning an attack that would catch them completely unawares. Table 12 indicates that Mohamud was anticipating the sucker's pay-off against his local community—represented by a 5 in the upper-right quadrant. The community's presumed unawareness is as represented by a 0.

Table 12. Mohamud's Interpretation of his Community, in and out of College

		Mohamud's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0 ✓, ✓
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

Leading up to the night of the planned attack on November 26, 2010, everything went according to plan, from Mohamud's perspective. He helped pay for the supplies needed to build a bomb. He had tested a backpack bomb with his comrades to see how everything would work and was convinced by the group to change his plans as to method of destruction.

Mohamud learned the night of the attack that the community he had worked against knew what he was doing all along and that the terrorists he trusted and worked with were government operatives attempting to protect the community. This reversal meant to Mohamud that the community, not he, enjoyed the sucker's pay-off, as shown in Table 13.

This thesis contends that because Mohamed felt he was tricked, the community gained in terms of security from attack (represented by a 5 in the bottom-left quadrant), but he gained nothing because he was arrested.

Table 13. Mohamud's Interpretation of his Community on Day of Terrorist Attack

		Mohamud's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5 ✓, ✓	Mutual Defection 0, 0

This operation was a win for the FBI. The organization marshaled its resources to prevent a malevolent young man from harming anyone within the community. But how does this interpretation apply to the community? Part of the community's purpose is to provide its members with opportunities and work with at-risk individuals to prevent their defection. When community cooperation breaks down, its members are more susceptible to becoming prospective terrorists, and law-enforcement organizations like the FBI must take over; thus, nobody in the community actually gains anything.

### C. PRISONER'S DILEMMA FROM THE COMMUNITY'S PERSPECTIVE

Local American communities typically offer immigrants opportunities to unite with them by acquiring naturalized U.S. citizenship. The local communities in Oregon, like most communities, also provide opportunities to pursue various careers and levels of education. These were the opportunities that Mohamud's parents sought when they left Somalia and became naturalized citizens. His father got a job so that he could support the family, put Mohamud through school, and ensure a higher quality of life. The neighbors in the local community thought of Mohamud as a "normal kid," and there were no

indications of extremist influence.<sup>156</sup> The community had no inkling that Mohamud held radical views in his early life, and interpreted their relationship as “mutually cooperative,” as shown in Table 14 represented by a 3 in the upper-left quadrant.

Table 14. Community’s Interpretation of Mohamud Prior to College

		Mohamud’s Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3 ✓, ✓	Sucker’s Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker’s Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

Mohamud graduated high school and was accepted into Oregon State University. While there he was part of the Muslim student association, several of his classmates thought of him as a “pretty normal guy.”<sup>157</sup> His radicalization did not go unnoticed, however, and the FBI was “tipped from someone concerned about him”<sup>158</sup> from within his community. This tip led to FBI interception of Mohamud’s emails to recruiters. To ascertain whether Mohamud was indeed radicalized, the FBI spoofed this third party’s email address and contacted Mohamud in his stead. Through meet-ups and recorded interactions, the FBI determined that Mohamud was dangerously disengaged from society and the local community.

Very importantly, Mohamud did not know that his terrorist friends were agents of the FBI. The ruse reveals that the community had decided to give up on pursuing further

<sup>156</sup>“Bomb suspect to classmate,” *NBC News*.

<sup>157</sup>Drogin and Choi, “Teen Held in Alleged Portland Bomb Plot,” *Los Angeles Times*.

<sup>158</sup>*Ibid*.



cooperation with Mohamud. As a result, neither side gained anything and the result is “mutual defection,” as represented by a 0 in the bottom-right quadrant of Table 14.

Table 15. Community’s Interpretation of Mohamud, in and out of College

		<b>Mohamud’s Options</b>	
		Cooperate	Defect
<b>Local Community Options</b>	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker’s Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker’s Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0 ✓, ✓

The FBI successfully thwarted Mohamud’s attack and the community continues to defect from Mohamed, as illustrated in Table 16, making the defection mutual. This is expressed in Mohamud’s arrest and imprisonment.

Table 16. Community's Interpretation of Mohamud on Day of Terrorist Attack

		Mohamud's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0 ✓, ✓

Some members of the community criticize the operation leading to Mohamud's arrest, arguing that he was entrapped. In an article entitled, "The FBI Successfully Thwarts its Own Terrorist Plot," Glenn Greenwald argues that the FBI's victory was driven by manipulation and pressure on Mohamud, rather than his own predisposition to crime.<sup>159</sup> The FBI refuted this claim by releasing various documents that indicate Mohamud was offered multiple alternatives to bombing mass casualties.<sup>160</sup> It was Mohamud who insisted, on many occasions, that he desired to play an operational role in mass murder. It was also Mohamud who picked the location and method of attack. Through the community's response to the "see something, say something" campaign, the FBI managed to thwart a murderous teenager who wished to devastate his local community.

<sup>159</sup>Glenn Greenwald, "The FBI successfully thwarts its own Terrorist plot," *Salon*, November 28, 2010, [http://www.salon.com/2010/11/28/fbi\\_8/](http://www.salon.com/2010/11/28/fbi_8/).

<sup>160</sup>Steve Benen, "Details Emerge on Thwarted Oregon Bomb Plot," *Washington Monthly*, November 28, 2010, [http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2010\\_11/026817.php](http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2010_11/026817.php).

#### **D. SUMMARY**

The case of Mohamed Mohamud illustrates an interesting problem in Western culture. Mohamud did not feel he had ties with the community in which he had spent most of his life. For all the successes of American communities' being democratic, multi-racial, and multiple-faith based, Mohamud did not identify as American, believing that being American and being Muslim were distinctly separate and seeing both identities as zero sums. Neither was Mohamud emotionally attached to the people in his community.

Terrorism gave Mohamud a sense of belonging that he was unable to find elsewhere. Members of the community did right to report him and thwart a potential terrorist attack, but in doing so, the community demonstrated that it had given up on him as a viable member of its society. Might there be other options for a community, aside from law-enforcement intervention, to counter the terrorist narrative?

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#### **IV. THE DE-RADICALIZATION OF MAAJID NAWAZ AND HIS RETURN TO THE COMMUNITY**

Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blind-folded fear.

—Thomas Jefferson<sup>161</sup>

What brings a person back from the brink when he has delved into a world that appears inescapable? For Maajid Nawaz, a combination of grievances with his community, an identity crisis at being a minority, charismatic recruiters, and compelling narratives led him to radicalization.<sup>162</sup> Like the subjects of the previous studies, Nawaz took advantage of the opportunities afforded him within his community, but was blinded by the radical narrative and found it compelling enough to justify leaving his community behind. But what brought about his subsequent repudiation? A look inside Nawaz's radicalization and de-radicalization offers insight into a counter-radicalization narrative that may assist in maintaining mutual cooperation.

This chapter examines how Nawaz's background contributed to his radicalization, as well as the situation between him and his community when he was confronted with ideas of terrorism. It discusses the unraveling process Nawaz experienced while imprisoned in Egypt and interprets the prisoner's dilemma through his perspective and that of the community.

##### **A. BACKGROUND AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE COMMUNITY**

###### **1. Early Life and Community Influence**

Maajid Nawaz was born in England in 1978, of a second-generation immigrant Pakistani family that practiced Islam. His father, an electrical engineer, traveled extensively for his work. His mother was rather liberal in her views on Muslim traditions,

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<sup>161</sup>Quotes by Thomas Jefferson, BrainyQuote, accessed April 7, 2015, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/t/thomasjeff101717.html>.

<sup>162</sup> Maajid Nawaz, *Radical My Journey out of Islamist Extremism* (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press, 2013), 60.

and her outlook prevailed when Nawaz's father was gone; but his father was strict on Muslim house rules when he was home.<sup>163</sup> Nawaz reflects that he learned to challenge the status quo from his mother, Abi, and his father: "Abi's liberal views challenging those of her community; my father taking on a leading corporation to set up the company's first trade union ... I have been lucky enough to inherit from them ... this instinct to rattle the status quo."<sup>164</sup>

Nawaz recounts many incidents of perceived racism that shaped his early life and decision-making process. He recalls that at eight years old, his grade school was not aware of Islamic dietary restrictions: "I remember being very scared, not just as a small child standing up to an adult, but also over why I wasn't allowed to eat the sausages. I really didn't know what they were, but my dad had been insistent that I thought I might have some reaction if I ate them." This early examples illustrates a pattern of ignorance that the community Nawaz was raised in toward the needs of Muslims within the community.

Years later, he noticed that classmates began to treat him differently after the rise of the AIDS epidemic and its origins in Africa. Although Nawaz was Pakistani, not African, the distinction was lost on his local community. Many children who had been his friends in grade school began adopting racial stereotypes they learned from their families: "almost overnight, the color of my skin defined me to friends who had previously seen only a happy, sociable boy."<sup>165</sup>

Along with this came a skinhead movement in his local community that promoted an exclusively white, aggressively racist line. Nawaz recounts a major moment in his young life when he was chased by one of these racist groups. As the pack surrounded him, a complete stranger intervened and drew their wrath off him. Nawaz was shocked. The stranger—whom he humanized in his memoirs by calling him "Matt"—was an

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<sup>163</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 10.

<sup>164</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>165</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

average white man, whom Nawaz had never met before. Nawaz states that he was paralyzed in disbelief, motionless as the group attacked Matt.

The police intervened before Matt was beaten to death<sup>166</sup>—but their response angered Nawaz. The police had observed skinheads fleeing the scene, but rather than pursue the obvious culprits, they began questioning Nawaz.<sup>167</sup> Underneath his anger at the police, he recalls feeling ashamed that he did not help the stranger who took his place in the beating: “The bungled police reaction may have made me more anti-establishment, but my own guilt drove me further away from my white friends.”<sup>168</sup> Overall, throughout his young life, Nawaz felt that the police treated him unfairly because he was a minority.

The seeds of radicalization continued to grow in Nawaz’s life and became most clear in an incident of self-radicalization that he called the green-backpack moment.<sup>169</sup> In another confrontation, he claims a larger armed gang within the local community approached Nawaz, his older brother Osman, and their Greek friend Nas. Rather than flee, they stood their ground as an act of self-defense. This alarmed the leader of the gang,<sup>170</sup> who signaled that he wanted to speak privately with Osman, and they stepped aside. After a brief exchange, the skinheads withdrew. Nawaz learned that Osman had tricked the gang by claiming that his backpack had a bomb in it, playing to the general paranoia that “all” Muslims were terrorists. Nawaz recalls that, “Osman’s bluff affected me more profoundly than any other event up to that point. I realized ... the futility of relying on men.”<sup>171</sup> This incident left Nawaz with the idea that the fear invoked by the bomb threat was a significant weapon in the psychological battle for respect from his community. He associated this victory with the defiance characteristic of the terrorist radicalization narrative.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>166</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 27–32.

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>168</sup>*Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>169</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>170</sup>*Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>171</sup>*Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>172</sup>*Ibid.*, 41–43.

Another factor that shifted Nawaz toward an exclusive Muslim identity was a growing awareness of events overseas. In Bosnia, indigenous Muslims were being massacred just because they were Muslim. As a result of this calamity, Muslims throughout Europe began to self-identify with political groups advocating Islamism: “the rise of Islamist groups was a key factor in shifting Muslims away from their national identities toward a more exclusively Muslim one.”<sup>173</sup> Islamism could give Nawaz the respect he needed to counter the rise in racism within his local community.

## **2. Extremist Radicalization Influence**

Nawaz’s initial foray into terrorism was his investigation of the revolutionary group known as Hizb al-Tahrir (HT). He and his brother were handed a leaflet by a recruiter named Nasim Ghandi. Since seeing another Muslim in their local community was rare, the brothers were curious about Nasim and what he had to teach. The HT exhorted at-risk Muslims throughout England to help create a caliphate and impose sharia law.<sup>174</sup> Nawaz was taught that current Middle Eastern governments were created by Western governments to oppress Muslims, and that the genocide in Bosnia was an example of Western civilization’s indifference to the slaughter of Muslims. These study circles used videos to graphically depict the human tragedy, with an inherent bias toward the sufferings of Muslims. Nawaz, angered by the racism he had grown up with and fueled by HT’s preaching, eagerly accepted the message.<sup>175</sup> Hindsight being 20/20, Nawaz now reflects that “when you’re that age, already angry and disenfranchised, you’re very susceptible to absolutes.”<sup>176</sup>

Nawaz moved to London, telling his parents he wanted to college in Newham. In reality, he was also there to spread the HT cause and recruit other members. He rose to a position of influence as president of the student union at university and used this position to propagandize Muslim students.

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<sup>173</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 39

<sup>174</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid., 51.



As the HT group grew on campus, tension arose with rival Jewish and African student groups. While Nawaz was on campus, a gang of British-African students confronted the Muslims in a large showdown with knives. A Muslim man, acting to protect the HT-led student union, confronted the leader of the Africans with a sword and in front of the crowd, killed the African student: “In one swift, calm, almost mechanical movement, Sa’eed plunged his monstrous blade ... deep into Ayotunde’s chest.”<sup>177</sup> Because he was on the scene, Nawaz, with the entire HT student union, was expelled from Newham College.<sup>178</sup> His mother begged him to return home to attend school, and Nawaz applied to a university back in Southend. He recounts, “Abi’s desperate intervention to force me to stay in Southend saved my academic career.”<sup>179</sup> He was selected for a program offered by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, which offered degrees in Arabic and law.

Nawaz began a double life, focusing on his studies during the week and busy with HT recruiting on the weekends. He met and married his wife, Rabia, also a member of HT, and was called by the organization to drop out and move to Pakistan to recruit members and expand the HT ideology (Pakistan had recently gone nuclear). Even as he was made a full member of HT, however, he became aware of political bickering within the group. In one incident, Nawaz met and was thoroughly unimpressed with the HT leader in Pakistan, an assessment he confided to his comrade Irfan. Nawaz had expressed concern about missed opportunities in maximizing the Pakistani movement; his friend took this conversation to the HT leader in order to obtain favor. Writes Nawaz, “Irfan’s actions opened my eyes. I saw that rather than everyone in the organization doing things for the good of the cause, it seemed to me there were baser instincts at work too.”<sup>180</sup> He was successful in recruiting members to HT, but when Rabia became pregnant, decided to return to the UK to ensure the child was born in Europe. SOAS allowed him to return to his studies, and Nawaz continued to campaign diligently for the HT cause in Southend.

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<sup>177</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 80.

<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>179</sup>*Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>180</sup>*Ibid.*, 101.

Nawaz passed his exams and moved his family to Alexandria, Egypt, under the pretext of continuing classes at SOAS, but in reality, to help the HT organization there.<sup>181</sup> Nawaz thought that he was fighting for a cause greater than himself in HT and reveled in the opportunity to recruit in Egypt, despite substantial risk.<sup>182</sup>

Although he avoided detection, the authorities noticed Narwaz's recruiting efforts, and he was seized by Egyptian police,<sup>183</sup> taken to Al-Gihaz prison in Cairo and was tortured before being transferred to Mazra Tora prison. He was held in solitary confinement three months without formal charges. It then took two years before he was convicted as a prisoner of conscience. While serving his sentence, the combination of contact with other political prisoners and having ample time and opportunity to read began to alter Nawaz's perspective on life.

### **3. Process of De-radicalization**

During his time in HT, Nawaz had been exposed to trivial bickering throughout the organization. The reality of HT leadership's politics contradicted what he thought the organization stood for. While this disturbed him, it came to the fore when he found that the British HT had criticized Nawaz's behavior during his trial. HT leaders had asked Nawaz to be "defiant" to the Egyptian government by pleading guilty to all charges.<sup>184</sup> He recounts, "My disillusionment with HT leaders and their tactics meant that by the time I was sentenced, I was ready for some serious thinking about my ideology."<sup>185</sup> These sideline directives from HT individuals living comfortably in the United Kingdom while he was incarcerated in a country that did not provide the same rights and human decency as his community, led Nawaz to doubt the organization.

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<sup>181</sup>The HT organization had been behind a failed coup in Egypt and had a link to the assassination of Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt, in 1981. This had led the Egyptian government to ban HT in all forms. For more information on the matter, see: Nawaz, *Radical*, 118.

<sup>182</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 116.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*, 127–34.

<sup>184</sup>*Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>185</sup>*Ibid.*, 182

One of the motivating factors in Nawaz's de-radicalization was the work of Amnesty International (AI), which campaigned vigorously to have him released, arguing that he had committed no crime, but was in prison due to his beliefs. AI resolved the controversy as to whether they should support a radicalized terrorist "in the manner of Voltaire[:] ... 'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.'"<sup>186</sup>

Nawaz began to realize while imprisoned that HT and terrorist ideals were contrary to what he considered to righteousness and impartiality.<sup>187</sup> He had the opportunity to study the Quran, realizing that he was fighting for a religion based on a book he had never actually read. Nawaz had many small epiphanies while studying in prison. "It might sound strange, given how committed I was to the Islamist ideology, but I had never properly studied Islam or the Quran."<sup>188</sup> He learned that terrorist organizations are politically driven movements before religious ones, and many of the followers of these terrorist regimes came from irreligious backgrounds.<sup>189</sup> He was also able to read *Muraja'at*,<sup>190</sup> which deconstructed the ideology of jihadism, and discovered that jihadist organizations were incorrect in their interpretations:

Over the years, I began to reexamine everything I knew and had been prepared to die for. Though we had placed establishing an "Islamic State" and "implementing" *shari'ah* as law above even the most religious of rituals, I couldn't help noticing that not once were the words "law," "state," or "constitution" mentioned in the Qur'an. When I thought about this further, it made historic sense. The Qur'an was an ancient text, while political ideas such as "unitary legal system," "codified law," "statehood," and "constitution" were modern political concepts: they did not exist at the time the Qur'an was written.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 183.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid., 193.

<sup>188</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>189</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>190</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid., 190.

Nawaz also learned about the detriments of thinking of life in terms of zero sums and not seeing both sides of an argument: “just as the world is not binary between Muslims against all others, it is also not a binary between America against all others.”<sup>192</sup>

By the time Amnesty International was able to help Nawaz win his freedom, he was conflicted by the life he led and the knowledge he had attained while in prison. This forced Nawaz to distance himself from his former beliefs.<sup>193</sup> His emotional reunion with his wife and child was overshadowed when his newfound misgivings brought him in direct conflict with his wife and HT as a whole. Once back in Southend, his marriage collapsed due to the changes Nawaz was undergoing and Rabia’s obedient adherence to the HT cause.<sup>194</sup> He realized he could not remain in an organization that is predicated on a political ideology dressed as Islam, and resigned his membership. Meanwhile, he had been readmitted to his former school, SOAS, and prepared for final examinations and graduation.

Soon afterwards, Nawaz reunited with a former friend and fellow student, Ed Husain, and they decided to create a counter-radicalization movement against terrorist recruitment.<sup>195</sup> Their organization, *Quilliam*, seeks to expose terrorism for what Nawaz now believes it is: a radical movement that manipulates religious Islamic doctrine to serve political purposes.<sup>196</sup> Nawaz recounts his thoughts when starting the organization: “Why should extremist views, which went against basic liberties, be any more acceptable than racist or homophobic ones?”<sup>197</sup> Nawaz expanded the movement into Pakistan, attempting to correct the mistakes of his past by creating a similar institution called *Khudi*. Like *Quilliam*, *Khudi* offers Pakistani Muslims a counter-narrative to extremism by promoting liberal, democratic institutions that stand against the extremist narrative.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>192</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 184.

<sup>193</sup>Ibid., 181.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid., 206, 208.

<sup>195</sup> For more on Husain’s story, see: Ed Husain, *The Islamist: Why I Became an Islamic Fundamentalist, What I Saw Inside, and Why I Left*. (London: Penguin, 2007).

<sup>196</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 210.

<sup>197</sup>Ibid., 233.

<sup>198</sup>Ibid., 235–41.

## **B. INTERPRETATION OF THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA THROUGH NAWAZ'S PERSPECTIVE**

Nawaz emphasizes throughout his book, *Radical*, the effects of perceived racism from his community, starting at a very young age, beginning with the lunch lady arguing with him over why he couldn't eat sausage. He remembers not being allowed to play soccer with his classmates because he was Pakistani: "I went over to Patrick and asked him what was going on. He suddenly turned around and punched me hard in the stomach . . . 'This game's not for Pakis!'"<sup>199</sup> He admits that he often failed to see acts of kindness from members of his community and focused on the bad instead of the good. The story of Matt, who tried to defend the young Nawaz and took a severe beating, was overlooked in the resentment he felt toward the police officers who questioned him instead of chasing the skinheads.<sup>200</sup> Moments like these had driven Nawaz toward seizing upon the terrorist culture as a means of defending himself from his community: "Islamism did what hip-hop culture couldn't do. It was alive, beating in the hearts of men, and it was prepared to sacrifice everything to regain lost dignity . . . And I wanted a dose of that courage."<sup>201</sup>

Nawaz's perception that he had to defend himself from a community that sought to do him harm supported his idea that the community enjoyed the "sucker's payoff," represented by a 5 for the community in the lower-left quadrant of the prisoner's dilemma in Table 17.

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<sup>199</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 16.

<sup>200</sup>*Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>201</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

Table 17. Nawaz's Interpretation of his Community in his Early Life

		Nawaz's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5 ✓ <sub>3</sub> ✓	Mutual Defection 0, 0

In Nawaz's eyes, his community took advantage and subjugated him because of the color of his skin. Throughout his youth, Nawaz claims to have been subject to violence and police discrimination. This spawned a heightened awareness of foreign conflicts against Muslims in the Bosnian war. "It was surprising to some people how easy it felt to switch my mindset to this new political viewpoint."<sup>202</sup>

Unbeknownst to his parents, Nawaz joined the HT and worked under them while still fulfilling the wishes of his parents to pursue higher education. Without the presence of a *Khilafah*, or caliphate, Nawaz maintained an "us versus them" zero-sum mentality against his local community throughout his college years. Because of this outlook, Nawaz's actions against his community reflected "mutual defection," as illustrated in Table 18. Nawaz believed the local community actively oppressed Muslims; in turn, he would work to recruit young Muslims and rouse them against the community (represented by a 0 in the bottom-right quadrant).

<sup>202</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 61.

Table 18. Nawaz's Interpretation of his Community while Radicalized

		Nawaz's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0 ✓, ✓

Nawaz attended college and became president of the student union to promulgate extremist ideas to other young Muslims, culminating in a clash with a rival campus group and the murder of a student. Though this led to the expulsion of HT, Nawaz continued to fulfill the aspirations of his parents while leading a double life. Although Nawaz's community provided him with an education and economic stability, he chose to see life in absolutes and remained a diligent servant of HT and the global caliphate.

In Egypt, Nawaz's imprisonment became a time to reflect on his life and learn what exactly he was serving. He began to realize that the goals of HT did not coincide with the content of the Quran. He learned that HT, like many terrorist organizations, used half-truths of history and religion to manipulate the young, and concluded that terrorist organizations and regimes were overwhelmingly political, mirroring pre-WWII fascism more than religion:

Unitary legal systems were a European idea, and worse, the desire to merge law with religious canons was specifically a Catholic pre-Reformation idea. This realization had profound implications for my beliefs. Rather than justice—legal consistency—being derived from Islamism, Islamism relied on *Western* concepts of justice to off the

ground. I buried my head in my hands as I slowly realized: we Islamists were the bastard children of colonialism.<sup>203</sup>

Nawaz admits that the process of de-radicalization was neither fast nor easy, but through time and self-study he came to believe that the principles of respect for basic human rights, pluralism, individual freedoms, faith, and democracy were what he had been fighting for,<sup>204</sup> and that these principles had been embedded in the community with which he grew up in all along.

Having decided it was his duty to provide a counter-narrative to Islamism, he also wished to provide a counter-narrative against those he calls “Islamophobes”—persons exhibiting hatred towards, or fear of, the religion of Islam. “One extreme calls for the Quran to be banned, the other calls to ban everything but the Quran. Together, they form the negative and the positive of a bomb fuse.”<sup>205</sup> This led Nawaz to his social movement that pushes for democratization. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair and Prime Minister David Cameron have recognized Nawaz’s work for its importance in the fight against terrorist radicalization in the community. Since his epiphany in Egypt, he has worked alongside the community in the UK to combat radicalization—represented by a 3 in the upper-left quadrant, shown in Table 19 as “mutual cooperation” between Nawaz and his community.

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<sup>203</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 191.

<sup>204</sup>*Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>205</sup>*Ibid.*, 212.



Table 19. Nawaz's Interpretation of his Community once De-radicalized

		Nawaz's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3 ✓, ✓	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

### C. PRISONER'S DILEMMA FROM THE COMMUNITY'S PERSPECTIVE

As a community, Southend's immigration policy follows that of its nation, the United Kingdom. The UK has accepted substantial immigration from its former colonies and territories under the British Empire, in particular, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, South Africa, Kenya, and the Caribbean.<sup>206</sup> In Southend, Pakistani Britains may feel marginalized, as they represent only 0.9 percent of the local population.<sup>207</sup> For Nawaz, "growing up in such a minority community has an effect on you. It was a completely different experience from being brought up in a large Pakistani community ... I grew up feeling far more equipped to deal with cultural differences."<sup>208</sup> Any marginalization felt by minorities is presumably made up for by living in a liberal democratic system that is religiously tolerant and by receiving a British education.

A community like Southend contains many groups, some good, and some bad; but the overall purpose of a community is to provide opportunities for the betterment of an

<sup>206</sup>"Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group (Percentages)," Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics, accessed May 25, 2015, <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=3&b=276844&c=southend&d=13&e=13&g=405474&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1432578197606&enc=1&dsFamilyId=1812&nsjs=true&nsck=false&nssvg=false&nswid=1366>.

<sup>207</sup>Ibid.

<sup>208</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 3.

individual within society, through education and the right to vote for legislators that share similar ideals. Communities offer organizations to join, different types of education, and choices among the fields an individual may choose to pursue. Although Nawaz's local community had some groups like the skinheads Nawaz dealt with in his early life, it also had a police force to protect him and other individuals from disenfranchisement and assault. Because Southend is a free and open democratic society, and Nawaz's family worked, and their children were in the community's educational system, the community viewed its relationship with Nawaz as "mutually cooperative" (represented by a 3) and did not perceive that it might be alienating Muslim youths in any distinguishable way. This interpretation is conveyed in Table 20.

Table 20. Community's Interpretation of Nawaz in his Early Life

		Nawaz's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3 ✓, ✓	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

When Nawaz joined HT and became a terrorist, he had the objective of establishing a caliphate to protect all Muslims from oppressive states. Throughout this time in his life, he worked towards the educational achievements his parents desired for him while also working for HT and its goals.

Nawaz used his community's principles of freedom of speech and religion against itself to recruit and radicalize other British Muslims, convincing his college administration to "set up an HT front group" for recruiting and promulgation of the HT message under the guise of multiculturalism.<sup>209</sup> As his radicalization increased, the group used public prayer to build community and as "a propaganda tool and a means of intimidation."<sup>210</sup> From the community's perspective, Nawaz was receiving the "sucker's pay-off" in the prisoner's dilemma shown in Table 21. His ability to recruit while living and maintaining a family ensured he reaped the fruits of the community while ideologically fighting what it stood for (represented by a 5 in the upper-right quadrant for Nawaz).

<sup>209</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 68-69.

<sup>210</sup>*Ibid.*, 78.

Table 21. Community's Interpretation of Nawaz once Radicalized

		Nawaz's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0 ✓, ✓
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

Nawaz's time in the prison changed his perspective. "As an extremely idealistic twenty-four-year old, full of rage against society, and having nothing else to do but study over the course of four years, I came to reevaluate everything I stood for."<sup>211</sup> Nawaz began to comprehend ideas in a different way by disconnecting justice and radicalization, and realized that what he had learned as an extremist was wrong.<sup>212</sup> As a result, he left the leadership of HT and divorced his wife.<sup>213</sup>

In 2008, the community saw Nawaz create an organization that opposed Islamist, anti-community extremism and promoted counter-radicalization. Nawaz's propensity for activism found new expression in assisting the community. Nawaz now believes he can spread a peaceful Islam and provide a counter-narrative while promoting democracy.<sup>214</sup> The community's observation of Nawaz's desire to rejoin and protect society suggests a mutually cooperative environment between the two (as demonstrated by a 3 in the upper-left quadrant of Table 22).

<sup>211</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 181.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid., 192.

<sup>213</sup>Ibid., 206, 208.

<sup>214</sup>Ibid., 243–248.

Table 22. Community's Interpretation of Nawaz once De-radicalized

		Nawaz's Options	
		Cooperate	Defect
Local Community Options	Cooperate	Mutual Cooperation 3, 3 ✓, ✓	Sucker's Pay-off 5, 0
	Defect	Sucker's Pay-off 0, 5	Mutual Defection 0, 0

#### D. SUMMARY

What made Maajid Nawaz different from the subjects of the previous case studies? The themes that made Nawaz defect were similar to those shared by Hasan and Mohamud. But Nawaz came to believe that the principles he was fighting for were already present within his community, not in an established terrorist organization. After his religious education, Nawaz supported the practice of Islam in what he perceived as its proper form, not the politicized view used by terrorists to recruit Muslims around the world.

His insights have created a new Muslim narrative within his community, one that the Westerners can accommodate in their greater society. If Nawaz is correct, sound government and counter-radical organizations are necessary to address and counter the building blocks of the radicalization narrative and provide an avenue for mutual cooperation between at-risk Muslims and their local communities.

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## V. CONCLUSIONS

Whether you are Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Christian or Sikh, whether you were born here or born abroad, we can still feel part of this country – and we must now all come together and stand up for our values with confidence and pride.

—David Cameron<sup>215</sup>

Reasonable people adapt themselves to the world. Unreasonable people attempt to adapt the world to themselves. All progress, therefore, depends on unreasonable people.

—George Bernard Shaw<sup>216</sup>

In Prime Minister David Cameron’s 2015 speech on the problem of terrorist radicalization, he recognized the dilemma Western societies and states have with regard to at-risk Muslims who abandon their community’s ideals for terrorism.<sup>217</sup> In all three cases studied in this thesis, the subject defected from local social bonds and made what seemed a reasonable decision under the circumstances. Though each radicalization produced a different result, examination reveals that something was consistently missing from the local community: a stronger response that would have provided an alternative to the radicalization narrative.

This chapter examines what these case studies had in common, focusing on identity crisis, second-generation residency, the problem of tragedy, and the recruitment narrative. It also draws from Robert Axelrod’s work a set of possible approaches to counter-radicalization and de-radicalization in local communities, including strong institutions and reciprocity to counter the terrorist narrative, enhance civil society and democracy, de-glamorize terrorist regimes, and increase de-radicalization programs in the prison system. Next, it interprets a rival approach to liberalism in IR theory, that is, neo-

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<sup>215</sup>Lizzy Dearden, “David Cameron extremism speech,” *The Independent*, July 20, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/david-cameron-extremism-speech-read-the-transcript-in-full-10401948.html>.

<sup>216</sup>George Bernard Shaw Quotes, BrainyQuote, accessed July 8, 2015, [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/g/george\\_bernard\\_shaw.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/g/george_bernard_shaw.html).

<sup>217</sup>Dearden, “Extremism Speech,” *The Independent*.

conservatism, to examine its analysis of lone-wolf radicalization. Finally, it recommends areas for further research within this field of study.

**A. ANALYSIS: DEFECTION EXAMINATION, THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA AND LIBERALISM, AND STRENGTHENING THE ANTI-RADICAL NARRATIVE**

No two radicalizations are alike. What can be ascertained through a comparison of Nidal Hasan, Mohamed Mohamud, and Maajid Nawaz are similar themes that, properly analyzed, may suggest preventive measures to lone-wolf terrorist radicalization.

**1. Themes of Radicalization and Defection**

One important theme revealed in these case studies, especially as analyzed by application of the prisoner's dilemma to local communities, is a lack of integration between the individual and his community. In their time within their local communities, the subjects saw life in zero sum terms and eventually allied with their Muslim identities over their social ones. Hasan spent many years in the army before his defection, but when confronted with the terrorist narrative, he chose to embrace it as the Muslim narrative. Mohamud and Nawaz, on the other hand, were young and not as integrated in their communities before their radicalization at fifteen and sixteen years old, respectively.

All three individuals were second-generation immigrants.<sup>218</sup> In his study of radicalization, Oliver Roy concludes, "Western Muslims have varied personal histories and include different categories: the majority are second-generation Muslims who were either born in [the West] or came as children."<sup>219</sup> One of the characteristics of second-generation Muslims is a tendency to resonate with their parent's religion, but not to be overly religious before radicalization. These individuals typically have limited knowledge of Islam growing up, but nevertheless appreciate their heritage. Besides receiving limited

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<sup>218</sup>Bruce Hoffman and Fernando Reinares, *The Evolution of the Global Terrorist Threat: From 9/11 to Osama Bin Laden's Death*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

<sup>219</sup>Olivier Roy, "Islamic Terrorist Radicalization in Europe," *Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)*, 2007, 52, [www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=45688](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=45688).



religious training, they were also Western educated.<sup>220</sup> The ability of recruiters to spin the Islamic religion according to a political pretext attracts these targets, as compared to their parents; growing up, they often find their parents' practice of Islam difficult to relate to.<sup>221</sup> Hasan, Mohamud, and Nawaz confronted similar difficulties as second-generation Muslims. Hasan turned to religion at a later age, and when he did, he responded to the Islamist preaching of recruiter al-Awlaki. The same can be said for Nawaz, when he heard tales of Bosnian genocide at age sixteen. As for Mohamud, he was not dependent on external guidance or direction;<sup>222</sup> instead, he was motivated by encounters on the Internet and social media and sought out terrorist recruiters and organizations on his own.<sup>223</sup>

Another motivating factor in the radicalization of these individuals was that some sort of tragedy had occurred in their lives. Silber and Bhatt argue that there is generally a combination of four potential complications to catalyze radicalization: economic, social, political, and personal.<sup>224</sup> Hasan was confronted with a combination of personal, social, and political difficulties, beginning with the death of his mother (personal), which overlapped the attacks of September 11 and the rise of anti-Islamic sentiment in the United States that year (social).<sup>225</sup> Later that year, the war on terrorism led to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. These international conflicts involving Muslims (political), coupled with the preaching of al-Awlaki, contributed to his radicalization. Mohamud, too, was confronted with personal and political complications. Although he stated that he was radicalized at fifteen, coherent ideas and desires to harm his community arose around the time his parents divorced (personal). As with Hasan, the

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<sup>220</sup>Roy, "Islamic Terrorist," 52; Alpaslan Ozerdem and Sukanya Podder, "Disarming Youth Combatants: Mitigating Youth Radicalization and Violent Extremism," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4 no. 4 (2011), 63–80, 64, DOI: 10.5038/1944-0472.4.4.3.

<sup>221</sup>Meleagrou-Hitchens, "Face of Western Jihad," 28.

<sup>222</sup>Lorenzo Vidino, *Radicalization, Linkage, and Diversity: Current Trends in Terrorism in Europe*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011), 35; Hafez and Mullins, "Radicalization Puzzle," 5-6.

<sup>223</sup>Coultas, "Combat Terrorism," 30; Silber and Bhatt, "Radicalization," 24; Vidino, *Radicalization*, 35.

<sup>224</sup>Silber and Bhatt, "Radicalization," 32.

<sup>225</sup>Khan, "Attitudes Toward Muslim Americans," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*.

international conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq could have been a motivating factor (political).<sup>226</sup> Nawaz grew up confronted with a combination of social and political problems that drew him to radicalization, including perceived racism and discrimination in his early life (social). Coupled with the Bosnian conflict and the slaughter of Muslims (political), it was easy for a charismatic recruiter to convince him to radicalize.<sup>227</sup>

In various studies on the subject of radicalization, it is concluded that the two narratives most widely used by recruiters are a victim-based/defensive portrayal of Muslims and an appeal for a national caliphate.<sup>228</sup> Research suggests that Hasan's motivation was to defend Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan against the United States.<sup>229</sup> Though Mohamud was not directly recruited by a recruiter or organization, information provided by the FBI suggests that Mohamud was desired to commit violent jihad and destroy others in the name of Islam.<sup>230</sup> One might conjecture that his motivation was to defend other Muslims, but no rationale of this sort has been validated. Nawaz became motivated through a combination of the above narratives. As a youth, Nawaz felt disenfranchisement and, confronted with the concept of a national caliphate, he made it his objective to defend Muslims by achieving this goal. These two narratives, combined with the previously mentioned factors, have effectively recruited Muslims throughout the United States and Europe.

This research finds that there are many contributing factors to Muslim radicalization in the West. What seems to be the biggest concern for local communities is

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<sup>226</sup>"Bomb suspect to classmate: 'I hate Americans,'" *NBC News*.

<sup>227</sup>Nawaz, *Radical*, 51.

<sup>228</sup>John Horgan and Max Taylor, "The Psychological and Behavioral Bases of Islamic Fundamentalism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13 no. 4 (2011), 37–71, DOI: 10.1080/09546550109609699; Nawaz, *Radical*, 45–248; Silber and Bhatt, "Radicalization," 19, 45, 74, 88; Quintan Wiktorowicz, "A Genealogy of Radical Islam," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28 (September 2004), 75–97, 2005, DOI: 10.1080/10576100590905057; Alex Wilner and Claire-Jehanne Dubouloz, "Homegrown terrorism and transformative learning: an interdisciplinary approach to understanding radicalization," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 22 no. 1 (February 2010), 33–51, DOI: 10.1080/14781150903487956.

<sup>229</sup>Kim D. Chanbonpin, "We Don't Want Dollars, Just Change," *Northwestern Journal of Law & Social Policy* 6 no. 1 (2011), 4, <http://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/njls/vol6/iss1/1>; Lee, "Wolves in sheep's clothing," 21–25.

<sup>230</sup>U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, "Arrest Warrant," 10.

how to stop the identity crisis that at-risk individuals face as Americans and Muslims. Local communities also need a counter-narrative to neutralize the terrorist narrative. Western communities typically provide more opportunities and an overall better quality of life than other regions of the world. Yet news stories often reveal that radicalized, Western-raised Muslims attack their communities in the name of a terrorist organization or greater Islam. Application of the prisoner's dilemma and the principles of liberalism in IR theory suggest that the basic concepts and conclusions of theorist Robert Axelrod, as applied to local and governmental institutions, might help stem the tide of radicalization in the U.S., eliminating the false choice of being a Muslim or an American while ensuring that civil liberties remain intact.

Axelrod's conclusions in *The Evolution of Cooperation* and "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy" may be profitably applied to local communities' interactions with at-risk American Muslims for the prevention of lone-wolf radicalization. As shown in the case studies, an individual's inability to bridge the identity gap of being a Muslim as well as a local community member—and a community's corresponding inability to help this Muslim bridge the gap—may lead an individual to perceive that defection to terrorism is a meaningful alternative. Axelrod's ideas of reciprocity and the importance of institutions between state actors, when applied to local communities, may help counter radicalization narratives and ensure mutual cooperation.

## **2. Counter-Radicalization, De-radicalization, and Mutual Cooperation**

Looking through the lens of the prisoner's dilemma and liberal international-relations theory, we see that local communities need tools to address the problem of integration and segregation and counter the terrorist narrative. Communities also need ways to assist in the de-radicalization process. Applying Axelrod's idea that institutions promote international cooperation between local communities and at-risk Muslim Americans, this thesis recommends a number of solutions to the problem of lone wolves.

The first issue to address is isolation and identity crisis within Muslim-American communities, especially with regard to second-generation youths. Prime Minister David

Cameron has stated, “there is a danger in some of our communities that you can go your whole life and have little to do with people from other faiths and backgrounds.”<sup>231</sup> The same can be said for some communities in the United States. When individuals rarely come in contact with people of other faiths and backgrounds, few models are provided for consciously maintaining both one’s heritage and a sense of shared belonging—of demonstrating how one may be a member of the community, and an American, irrespective of whether one is also a member of a minority. The circumstance of segregation and isolation may also reinforce a sense that there is an unbridgeable divide between being a Muslim and being an American. A more cohesive and integrated society such as the traditional idea of the melting pot helps make individuals less vulnerable to radicalization. Institutions that promote cohesiveness may help resolve the Muslim identity crisis while providing a counter-radical narrative.

Local communities in the United States may benefit from organizations like *Quilliam*; because Muslim youth have a hard time identifying with their parents’ form of Islam, such groups may be a more socially palatable alternative, expressing compelling counter-narratives by aggressively asserting civil-society-led initiatives. Society might use these institutions to promote the importance of democracy and address its relationship to the Islamic religion.

The establishment of *Quilliam*-like institutions around the United States may serve to de-glamorize and expose the extremist cause. Extremist groups like the Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) appeal to many youths because their Internet recruitment videos romanticize the defense of Muslims and national caliphates.<sup>232</sup> Anti-radical institutions might help deter lone-wolf terrorism by asserting that terrorist organizations are not a pioneering and heroic movement, but rather people that subjugate their fellow Muslims. They might also challenge the recruitment myth that Western societies are conspiring against the Islamic religion in any way. America’s foundational principles are freedom of

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<sup>231</sup>Dearden, “Extremism Speech,” *The Independent*.

<sup>232</sup>John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, and Michele Zanini, “Networks, Netwar, and Information-Age Terrorism,” in *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment* ed. Russell D. Howard and Reid L. Sawyer (McGraw Hill Companies, Connecticut, 2004), 86–103; Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 158–163.

speech and religion; institutions might empower local Muslims to speak out against terroristic organizations and promote principles of democracy in their own communities.

Alongside counter-radicalization institutions, de-radicalization programs are needed in the prison system. Imprisonment played a vital role for the de-radicalization of Nawaz, whereby he was allowed to study while living alongside other prisoners of conscience. A similar experience is reported to have happened to Mohamed Mohamud. Since his incarceration, Mohamud has apologized for his actions and re-evaluated his life.<sup>233</sup> Like Nawaz, he has taken to reading the Quran and offers to speak to other Muslims to prevent their becoming extremists.<sup>234</sup> De-radicalization programs may give hope to prisoners by offering them a chance to re-integrate with their communities once they have completed their sentences. When young people commit petty crimes or start to stray, a well-conceived and implemented institution may effectively affirm the rules and expectations of the community before a crisis is reached.

Like Robert Axelrod's conclusions on state interactions, institutions for counter-radicalization and de-radicalization would require a long-term approach in working with potentially at-risk youth. Additionally, institutions must ensure that clear rules and expectations of good behavior are promoted as the keys to cooperation versus defection.<sup>235</sup> The reciprocity of a continual working relationship between local communities and these institutions would encourage long-term mutual cooperation.

## **B. A NEOCONSERVATIVE COUNTERARGUMENT**

The use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again: and a nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered.

—Edmund Burke<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup>“Mohamed Mohamud sentenced for 2010 bomb plot,” *KOIN news*, October 1, 2014, <http://koin.com/2014/10/01/mohamed-mohamud-sentence-in-portland-christmas-tree-terror-plot/>;

<sup>234</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup>Axelrod, *Cooperation*, 5–7.

<sup>236</sup>Edmund Burke Quotes, Brainy Quote, accessed July 15, 2015, [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/e/edmund\\_burke.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/e/edmund_burke.html).

Liberalism is one approach to studying the relationships and interactions among states and non-state actors. A strong dissent from this belief structure's competency to handle the problem of radicalization is found in the neoconservative camp.

Neo-conservatism is a new concept in IR that attempts to blend liberalism with realism.<sup>237</sup> On one hand, neoconservatives agree with liberals on the importance of democracy and that the world is safer when democratic nations abound; on the other hand, they share a realistic skepticism about international institutions and agonize about the exhausting effects of democracy in the practice of foreign policy.<sup>238</sup> With regard to existential threats, neoconservatives tend to favor an aggressive and militarized response.<sup>239</sup>

In *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*, Daniel Drezner analyzes the major schools of international relations as to how each might react to a zombie attack. For neoconservatives, a zombie attack would elicit swift action, most likely military. This aggressive military would work to create such a positive reality that the zombies themselves would yearn to break free to join the American dream, once a "human" outpost is established.<sup>240</sup>

Using Drezner's scenario for reference, how would neo-conservatism address the lone-wolf radicalization dilemma? If the problem of lone-wolf terrorism within the United States persists, or becomes an even greater threat, the neoconservative solution would presumably involve strengthening and militarizing the police force against the problem. Since lone wolves can essentially attack anywhere and at any time, neoconservatives might recommend a constant large police presence within local communities,<sup>241</sup> beefing up security outside opera houses, train stations, and sporting

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<sup>237</sup>Francis Fukuyama, "The Neoconservative Moment," *The National Interest*, No. 76 (Summer 2004), 57–68, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42895959>.

<sup>238</sup>Jonathan D. Caverley, "Power and Democratic Weakness: Neoconservatism and Neoclassical Realism," *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 38 no.3 (2010), 2, <http://mil.sagepub.com/content/early/2010/04/13/0305829810366473.full.pdf>.

<sup>239</sup>Drezner, *Theories of International Politics*, 63.

<sup>240</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>241</sup>James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety," in *The Neocon Reader*, ed. Irwin M. Stelzer et al., (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 151–166.

events, for example. This would effectively establish a military state, in the name of security.

Another neoconservative recommendation might be to increase the pre-emptive detection capabilities of organizations like the NSA, FBI, and CIA to detect and arrest potential lone-wolf terrorists before they attack. This might require bypassing the judiciary for expediency.<sup>242</sup> Neoconservatives might argue that beefing up these organizations' detection capabilities actually works, as it did in the case of Mohamed Osman Mohamud. To be more effective and prevent another lone-wolf terrorist attack, these organizations need more capability to detect and prevent individuals from committing acts of terror.

The problem with neoconservative strategy is its potential infringement on American civil liberties. The issue of security versus liberty dates back to America's founding. Benjamin Franklin famously stated, "Those who surrender freedom for security will not have, nor do they deserve, either one."<sup>243</sup> Unfortunately, American history indicates that whenever the United States has been attacked or entered a major conflict, the nation has sacrificed some of its civil liberties for national security.<sup>244</sup> Those rights were suppressed only temporarily, till the conflict ended; in the war on terrorism, however, the conflict has no foreseeable end. Unlike previous U.S. wars and conflicts, this war does not pit one state against another, but rather, a state against an idea. A neoconservative strategy to end radicalization might mean favoring security, at the expense of civil liberties, into the future.

Unlike the neoconservative strategy, the liberal strategy does not ask U.S. citizens to surrender their civil liberties, but to embrace programs that would strengthen nationalism, civil society, and local community involvement. The liberal strategy

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<sup>242</sup>Thomas M. Keck, "The Neoconservative Assault on the Courts: How Worried Should We Be?" in *Confronting the New Conservatism: The Rise of the Right in America* ed. Michael Thompson et al. (New York: NYU Press, 2007), 164–187.

<sup>243</sup>Benjamin Franklin Quotes, Goodreads, accessed July 22, 2015, <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/140634-those-who-surrender-freedom-for-security-will-not-have-nor>.

<sup>244</sup>Richard Posner, *Not a Suicide Pact: The Constitution in a Time of National Emergency*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 7; "Legal Authorities Supporting The Activities Of The National Security Agency Described By The President," *U.S. Department of Justice*, January 19, 2006, 5.

addresses anarchy by insisting that local communities and institutions make clear what the rules and expectations for membership are. The Axelrod strategy is not necessarily a speedy process, but it does tend to ensure that long-term reciprocity will arise, leading to continually evolving mutual cooperation.

### C. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis serves as a starting point for further research on the prisoner's dilemma as applied to lone-wolf radicalization. In the absence of previous work on which to build, this thesis combines the comparative method and a biographical approach in its methodology, applying a micro-level analysis. Another possible approach might be a more macro-social level of analysis. Of the hundreds of historical lone-wolf case studies available, less than a handful were examined; by contrast, a macro-social level of analysis would uncover multiple cases of radicalization in a given area to determine root causes—whether social, economic, political, cultural, or historical. A criticism of macro-social research, as made by Marc Sageman in *Leaderless Jihad*, is that the study “has an inability to draw out the argument. If the same social, economic, political, or cultural factors are acting on millions of people, why do so few become terrorists?”<sup>245</sup> Criticism from Sageman aside, an analysis of larger data sets may prove useful in confirming conclusions that were reached through limited case studies.

While this thesis employs the prisoner's dilemma in an analytical assessment of lone wolves and communities, a more mathematical approach might well be considered, like that of scholars Todd Sandler and Daniel Arce in their work, “Terrorism and Game Theory,”<sup>246</sup> which examines terrorist targeting, anti-terrorism policies, and concessionary governmental policies.<sup>247</sup> Sandler and Arce's research applies a scientific framework to their conclusions. An augmented approach using the prisoner's dilemma to the study of lone wolves in specific local communities may enable more precise recommendations for creating effective counter-radicalization institutions.

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<sup>245</sup>Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 21.

<sup>246</sup>Sandler and Arce M., “Terrorism and Game Theory.”

<sup>247</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.



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